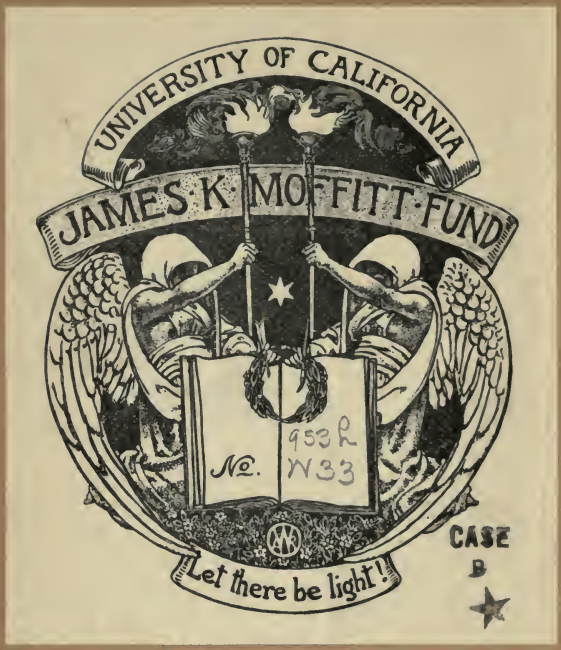
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OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

LORD BYRON.

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LORD BYRON.

From a Drawing by G. H. Harlowe.

London, Published May 1.1822, by H. Colburn, Conduit Street.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BYRON,

WITH

ANECDOTES OF SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

John Watkins

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN AND CO.

1822.

MOFFITT
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LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

TO

WILLIAM GIFFORD, ESQ.

SIR,

THE intent of this address is neither to pay you a compliment, nor to court your favour. The one you would despise, and of the other the writer has no need. But though praise may be beneath your notice, and personal motives are out of the question; this inscription conveys an eulogium of substantial value, since it is a call upon you for the application of great talents, and the employment of powerful means, in a cause worthy of your best exertions. Having already contributed, perhaps

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more than any man in this generation, to preserve our poetry from contamination, and our public morals from injury, your duties appear to multiply in proportion to the services you have performed. So long as there are enemies in the field, the privilege of superannuation cannot be allowed to him who has hitherto shown no decay of his faculties. The presence of Nestor in the camp of the Greeks, strengthened their councils and animated their commanders; but the fate of Ilium was of trivial import when compared with the morality of literature, in which are involved the interests of religion, and the welfare of society. At the head of the court of criticism, you have done so much for these great concerns, as to make us adopt the wish "that age may be the lot of any chief but thee." All virtue, however, is mixed; and it is to be regretted that the best men too often seek excuses for the neglect of what they are conscious ought to have been diligently

discharged. Complicated cares and increasing infirmities, the fear of giving offence, and the tenderness of friendship, are all ready apologies for sluggish indifference and want of zeal, when honour calls upon every man to buckle on his armour in the defence of truth.

To what cause may be attributed the forbearance hitherto manifested towards the most popular, and at the same time the most profane, poet of the present day, it would be useless to enquire. But it is a lamentable fact; and the friends of social order see with indignation, that the author of "Don Juan" and "Cain" has been suffered to ascend in the climax of prostituted genius, without meeting with that exposure and castigation in his progress, which might have restrained his rashness, if it did not reform his principles or correct his manners.

You, Mr. Gifford, have had the honour, such as it is, of being praised uniformly by the noble lord; and in that distinction, it seems, you stand proudly pre-eminent; for there is hardly any other living writer to whom he has not dealt out nearly as much abuse as adulation.

The voice of the public had long before this fixed you upon an immovable basis; so that the eulogies of Lord Byron, however strongly perfumed they might be, were of no value; but on the contrary had a suspicious character, and carried with them more of the appearance of fear than respect; like those offerings which the pagans presented to certain of their divinities, to propitiate their favour and prevent them from doing mischief.

Since then, the right honourable poet has rendered you, or himself, a marvellous piece of kindness in stating that his last performance

was submitted to your examination previous to its publication. It is true, he has also acknowledged that you disapproved of the piece, so far at least as to advise its suppression. Notwithstanding this, the "Mystery of Cain" made its appearance, in spite of your opinion; whence the world may estimate the sincerity of the noble lord, in consulting the judgment of wise men and then abiding by his own. There is nothing surprising in his lordship's resolution; but it is matter of astonishment and regret, that any communion at all should have subsisted between the conductor of the first Periodical Journal in Europe, and the author of such a performance as "Cain;" since the circumstance seems to account for the little notice that has been taken in the Quarterly Review of the literary delinquencies of the noble lord.

But as the fact has been divulged, it becomes incumbent upon you, Sir, to rouse from

your torpidity, and, setting aside all private considerations, to make it evident that the same principle actuates you now as when, in the Baviad and the Mæviad, you put down the witlings and libellers of a former day. The objects against whom you directed those powerful weapons, were harmless ephemera, or at the most but troublesome insects, compared with the chartered Libertine who has gone forth defying heaven and earth. In your hands, Mr. Gifford, is placed the only effectual instrument that can bring this haughty spirit to a sense of shame and a course of propriety.

This, perhaps, will be called the language of intolerance, and an incitement to persecution. Be it so:—the world has not now to learn the meaning of those words when used by men who, while they are themselves the most fiery inquisitors and torturers of characters, cannot endure that their own evil deeds

and the consequences of their dangerous principles should be made manifest.

But, Sir, you are not to be told that strong argument is the reverse of intolerance, and that the detection of falsehood, instead of being persecution, is a benefit conferred upon society. Were the case otherwise, and were Vice and Error to have full liberty to walk up and down the earth without exposure and confutation, because that such an opposition tends to abridge the means of mischief, then is it high time that you should close your critical labours, and, by consigning all the volumes of your valuable journal to the flames, proclaim your recantation aloud to the world. But if you are not prepared for such a sacrifice, and if you still think it a duty to continue in the office which you have hitherto filled with general credit, let it be seen that neither the fear nor the love of man has

any influence over your mind in the administration of justice.

I am,

With great respect for your virtue

and admiration of your talents,

**** *******

London, May 1, 1822.

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INTRODUCTION.

" POETRY, especially heroical," says the great Bacon, " seems to be raised altogether from a noble foundation, which makes much for the dignity of man's nature. For, seeing this sensible world is in dignity inferior to the soul of man, Poesy seems to endow human nature with that which History denies, and to give satisfaction to the mind with at least the shadows of things, where the substance cannot be had. For if the matter be thoroughly considered, a strong argument may be drawn from Poesy, that a more stately greatness of things, a more perfect order, and a more beautiful variety, delight the soul of man, than any way can be found in nature since the Fall. Wherefore, seeing the acts and events which are the

subjects of true History, are not of that amplitude as to content the mind of man, Poesy is ready at hand to feign acts more heroical. Because true History reports the successes of business not proportionable to the merit of virtues and vices, Poesy corrects it, and presents events and fortunes according to desert, and according to the law of Providence. Because true History, through the frequent satiety and similitude of things, works a distaste and misprision in the mind of man, Poesy cheereth and refresheth the soul, chanting things rare and various, and full of vicissitudes. So as Poesy serveth and conferreth to delectation, magnanimity, and morality; and therefore it may seem deservedly to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise the mind, and exalt the spirit with high raptures, by proportioning the shows of things to the desires of the mind, and not submitting the mind to things, as reason and history do; and by these allurements and congruities, whereby it cherisheth the soul of man, joined also with concert of music, whereby it may more sweetly insinuate itself, it hath won such success, that it hath been in estimation even in ruder times, and barbarous nations, when other learning stood excluded."

Poetry, therefore, being the highest effort of original genius, may justly claim for its professors, what indeed has always been conceded to them, the foremost rank in the temple of literary fame.

To the powerful influence of this fascinating art on language and opinion, the experience of all ages, and the history of every country, bear abundant testimony; but on the utility of poetry to any great moral purposes, there is a diversity of judgment among the wisest men of ancient and modern times. While Aristotle went so far as to say, of poetry, that it is better adapted for instruction than history; Plato, who was more of a harmonist than his pupil, and whose works are full of poetic beauty, denounced Homer as dangerous because he dealt in fiction; and in the same spirit of scrupulous morality, the same great philosopher, when framing an ideal republic of perfection, expressly banished all poets from it, as professing an art inimical to truth. However strange and severe this censure may seem, it has been countenanced by a sage of our own, who, at the very time that he was employed in immortalizing the bards of his country, and in forming a body of criticism more

valuable than the Poetics of Aristotle, ventured to remark on the amiable character of West, the translator of Pindar, that he was one of the few poets to whom the grave might appear without its terrors.

Plato has been animadverted upon in many elaborate dissertations, and Johnson has suffered much reproach for a reflection which it were well if the history of letters could prove to be unjust; but until that is the case, the main question in regard to the superior moral efficacy of the poetic art must remain unsettled. Poesy, however, has its various and commanding excellencies; for besides "raising the mind and exalting the spirit with high raptures," as Bacon observes, it brings out innumerable beauties from the immense storehouse of nature, that would otherwise have lain concealed, or been passed over without producing the least emotion: it also creates new beings and associations, which, if they cannot be identified with any realities in the external world, serve at least to excite astonishment at the power of the human intellect; and though it originates and centres solely in the imagination, it contributes material aid to the reasoning faculty by the force of illustration and comparison.

But farther than all this, Poetry has occasionally a great influence on the state of society, by the turn which it gives to public taste, opinion, and manners. Thus Virgil reconciled, in a great degree, the Roman people to imperial authority; and, in more modern times, Chaucer certainly paved the way for the Reformation, and the dissolution of the religious orders, by the ridiculous light in which his popular tales placed the monks and friars.

Such then being the magic power of this delectable art, it becomes a duty as well as a pleasure to examine into the character of the prevailing poetry of the age and country in which we live, as thereby a correct idea may be formed of the advance that has been made both in literary taste and moral sentiment. Perhaps at no period were there so many contemporary poets in one country as are now to be found in this island; and though, where the candidates for distinction are numerous, the palm of excellence can be but the lot of few, it is a proud triumph to literature that original genius, instead of being on the decline, is flourishing in full vigour, and putting forth new shoots every day. In this luxuriant enclosure, this "wilder-

ness of sweets," one object towers above the rest in lofty and fantastic majesty, demanding universal homage, and certainly attracting general admiration.

It is beyond question that the writings of Lord Byron have thrown the works of the other poets of the day comparatively into shade; and this celebrity has, with the accustomed effect of popularity, raised a host of imitators, who, if they cannot catch a portion of their master's genius, make up for the deficiency by aping his misanthropy, and exceeding him, if possible, in licentiousness. Thus standing, as he does, at the head of a new order, or school of poetry, which, whatever be its period of duration, cannot but affect the manners as well as the literature of the time in which it lasts; no excuse is necessary for an examination into the merits of one, whose performances directly and avowedly tend to produce a revolution in the feelings and principles of mankind. Where such is the aim of a writer, whose singularly versatile talents, elevated station, and peculiar circumstances, arm him with more than ordinary power to enable him to carry his object into effect, it becomes a duty to lay open his personal history, that it may be seen whe-

ther he, who seeks to create a new state of things, or rather to disorganize all that constitutes social union, has, by the propriety of his own conduct, established the right to be a dictator in morals, as well as in poetry. Living biography, if such a term may be used, is of a very delicate nature. Yet there want not sufficient authorities to warrant the practice of publishing the memoirs of men of eminence, while they are still shining above the horizon. The younger Patin did honour to his brother professors at Padua, by writing their history;—the life and letters of that learned phenomenon, Anna Maria à Schurman, were printed with her own consent; and John Le Clerc published, as the production of a friend, his own memoirs for the double purpose of showing what a great scholar he was, and of abusing his antagonists Burman and Bentley, who had levelled his critical reputation in the dust;—in our own day, one of the best writers and most amiable characters that the republic of letters can boast, has prefixed an interesting account of his eventful life to his translation of the first of Roman satirists; and to crown all, we are credibly informed, that Lord Byron himelf has ventured, like the late veteran Cumberland, to write his own history, with an

injunction, however, that it shall not appear till he is numbered with his ancestors.

Rich as such a piece of autobiography may be, both in style and incident, it will exhibit to those who shall chance to behold it, a veiled and not a naked portraiture of the noble writer's mind and actions. It is neither to be expected, nor desired, that a memoir written under his peculiar circumstances, and at so critical a period of his life, should display an exact representation of the master passion that rules the author's heart. Rousseau, indeed, left behind him a reflected image of his own character, sketched in all the minute accuracy of moral deformity; but who is there that would wish to see another instance of Confessions, in which there are no traces of humility, conscience, and respect for the common sense of mankind? The philosopher of Geneva, if such a splenetic spirit deserved the name of philosopher, was frank enough to own that he chose rather to be remarkable for his paradoxes than his prejudices; the plain sense of which amounted to this, that he was ready to sacrifice every thing to the love of singularity. Thus in declaiming against prejudice, he made it appear that

he was the slave of the very worst of all prejudices—a selfish, ungovernable pride of intellect. Rousseau, in fact, made an idol of his own genius, and then quarrelled with his contemporaries for not falling down and worshipping the image which he had set up, as the very model of mental excellence. Impatient of restraint, he denounced war upon all received principles, and every established institution, as derogatory to the liberty and independence of man, while at the same time he assumed the right of dictating, with more than oriental despotism, his opinions to others, without considering himself amenable to any laws of criticism or morals.

This extraordinary character had, it must be admitted, a brilliant imagination; but as it was suffered to run wild for want of self-controul and proper direction, it produced more weeds than flowers; and, what is worse, the mind of Rousseau thereby became so morbid that he at length grew fonder of poison than of nutriment, and the deadly nightshade was more acceptable to his taste than the fruits of Paradise. The false views of human nature to which he had habituated himself, made him take a delight in the

horrible conceptions of his fancy, till at last he believed that the world was peopled with nothing but vice and misery. What he felt in the dark chaos of his own perturbed brain, he supposed to be the actual condition of society, in which, according to his notion, it was his misfortune to be the object of general hatred on account of his superior virtue and talent. Yet the wayward caprices and dangerous extravagancies of this strange man have met with admirers, and even with apologists, who have justified him in his utmost aberrations, on the ground that as a sublime genius he was not to be tied down by vulgar rules to the ordinary duties of life. Thus genius is not only a sufficient atonement for mental errors, but for vicious practices; and the man who possesses this high gift in a supreme degree, may boldly set the laws of social order at defiance, and then presume to rush where angels fear to tread.

But the laws of truth are immutable and universal; they allow no exemption in favour of pre-eminent ability; and therefore he who violates them, must be responsible not only to the Judge of all thoughts and deeds, but even to the generation in which he is cast,

if his opinions and works shall produce an improper influence upon the state of the community. In such a case every individual is interested as a member of the commonwealth, the happiness of which it is his duty to promote by every means in his power; and by none more than in the endeavour to check the current of baneful principles, especially when those principles are sent forth clothed with the attractive ornaments of literary elegance, and recommended by the potent spells of rank and popularity.

It is not easy to open the eyes of those who are wilfully blind, and it is still more difficult to make a proud man sensible of his folly. Still something should be done to abate an increasing evil; and though lawless wit will, in spite of remonstrance, retain its votaries, the poison may be counteracted by an antidote. It is obvious, however, that the remedy must be of a caustic nature, to be of any powerful effect. Works of reasoning may be encountered by argumentation, till their fallacies are made sufficiently clear to require no farther notice: but errors of the imagination are not to be written down by logic; for their strength lies in fiction, and having

no tangible principles, they wound and are irrefutable. Didactic poetry, indeed, is of a more substantial form, and, therefore, as in the case of Pope's Essay on Man, the sophistry may be detected, because the false doctrine as well as the consequences of it, lie open to exposure, and are capable of confutation. But this is a species of the art that takes a narrow range, and is limited to few objects compared with the boundless regions of fable and feeling, lively invention, and metaphysical sentiment. It is in these wilds that the witcheries of moral delusion prevail, which prove so dangerous to the young and inexperienced, who are apt to take upon trust whatever has the charm of external dignity and meretricious beauty.

To undeceive those who are liable to be lost in this enchanted land, is, therefore, as noble and godlike an act of charity, as it was in the Hierarch, who

> ——— "from Adam's eyes the film remov'd,
> Which that false fruit that promis'd clearer sight
> Had bred; then purg'd with euphrasy and rue
> The visual nerve." ——

Such is the direct object of this biographical and critical memoir of one of the most prominent charac-

ters of the present age, who, by his wonderful powers, and fatal use of them, has acquired so dreadful a distinction in the world of letters, as calls for the only effectual means of abridging his influence by a detection of his errors.

Beyond this salutary point the writer does not profess or wish to go; for his aim is truth, and not satire; a simple exposition of facts, and not an exaggeration of failings. But if the life of a man is an illustration of his works, and if these, however elegant they may be, have a perilous tendency to make shipwreck the best interests of society, then a full and candid examination of the author's history is necessary in order to correct the mischief likely to be produced by the influence of his name, and the popularity of his writings.

To use the language of a sensible French critic— " Comme il n'y a point de loix civiles qui défendent à personne de se faire auteur, et d'écrire pour le public; il semble qu'il n'y en ait pas aussi, pour retrancher ou réformer la licence que chacun prend de se rendre le censeur ou le juge de ces sortes de

personnes."—" As there are no civil laws to forbid any one from being an author, and writing for the public; so neither are there any, as it should seem, to restrain or correct the liberty which every person takes to become the censor and judge of such characters."—*Baillet.*

CHAPTER I.

Genealogical History.—Grant of Newstead Abbey. Sir John Byron created a Peer by Charles the First. — His Descendants. —Trial of William Lord Byron, for murder.—Memoir of Admiral Byron.—Account of his Son, John Byron.

THE family of Buron or Byron, for the orthography continued unsettled till the reign of Henry the Second, ascends to the Conquest, at which period there were two potent barons of this name, Erneis and Ralph; but what relation they bore to each other, antiquaries and genealogists cannot determine. The first of these lords, Erneis, who appears to have been the most considerable of the two, held numerous manors in the counties of York and Lincoln; as Ralph, the direct ancestor of the present lord, did in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, in which last county he had his seat,

called Horestan Castle, from whence he took his title. To this Ralph succeeded Hugh de Buron, Lord of Horestan, who with his son Hugh, in the ninth year of the reign of King Stephen, gave to the monastery of Lenton in Nottinghamshire, the church of Ossington, to which grant was afterwards added that of Horsley, being the parochial church of Horestan. This last-mentioned Hugh de Buron retired from secular affairs, and professed himself a monk in the hermitage of Kersale, belonging to the priory of Lenton. He was succeeded in his estates by Sir Roger de Buron, who gave some lands to the monastery of Swinsted in the reign of Henry the Second. His son Robert de Byron, as the name now began to be spelt, increased the possessions and consequence of his family by marrying Cecilia, the daughter and sole heir of Sir Richard Clayton, of Clayton in Lancashire, at which seat the Byrons fixed their seat, till the reign of Henry the Eighth. This Sir Robert was succeeded by a son of the same name, whose two sons distinguished themselves with great glory, in the military service, under Edward the First. Sir John de Byron, the elder of these warriors, became governor of the city of York; and from him descended Sir John, who served in the

wars of France, under Edward the Third, by whom he was knighted at the memorable siege of Calais. He was succeeded by his brother, Sir Richard de Byron; whose widow, in 1397, made a vow of perpetual chastity before the Archbishop of York. Her son John, who received the honour of knighthood in the third year of Henry the Fifth, was succeeded in his estates by his second son Nicholas, whose son and heir, Sir John, joined Henry Earl of Richmond, on his landing at Milford, and was knighted by him at that place. He fought gallantly at the battle of Bosworth, for which he was afterwards made Constable of Nottingham Castle, and Steward and Warden of Sherwood Forest. At his death, in 1480, he left his lands to Nicholas his brother, who was made one of the knights of the Bath, at the marriage of Arthur Prince of Wales, in 1502. This Sir Nicholas had only one son, Sir John Byron, who was made by Henry the Eighth Steward of Manchester and Rochdale, and Lieutenant of the Forest of Sherwood. On the dissolution of the monasteries, he came in for no small portion of the spoils, being rewarded with the grant of the church and priory of Newstead, in the County of Nottingham, together with the manor of Papel-

wick, the rectory of the same, and the lands thereunto adjoining.

This religious house, called Newstead, that is Novus Locus, or New Place, was a monastery of canons regular of St. Augustine, dedicated to God and the Virgin Mary, by the founder, Henry the Second, who endowed it with the church and town of Papelwick, as well as other considerable appurtenances. The same king afterwards gave to the monks of Newstead, long and large wastes lying about the monastery, within the Forest, also a park of ten acres to be enclosed as they pleased, out of the run of the Verdurers, and a field of arable land, for a grange. Other grants of considerable value were made to this royal foundation, from time to time, by different benefactors; so that at the spoliation of the works of piety, and the alienation of them from the charitable objects for which they were set apart, the yearly revenues of Newstead Abbey, were estimated at somewhat more than two hundred pounds, a rate, considering all the circumstances, equivalent to a modern income of four thousand a year.

The Abbey now became the family seat of its new possessors, and so it has continued till the present time, though shorn of its honours, and exhibiting, in its dilapidated state, a melancholy relique of ancient splendour and hospitality. The worthy Evelyn, in his account of a tour through England, in the summer of 1654, has the following note: "We passed through Sherwood Forest, accounted the most extensive in England; then Papelwick, an incomparable vista, with the pretty castle near it. Thence we saw Newstead Abbey, belonging to the Lord Byron, situate much like Fontainebleau in France; capable of being made a noble seat, accommodated as it is with brave woods and streams: it has yet remaining the front of a glorious Abbey Church."

To this venerable mansion, its present noble owner consecrated the first effusion of his muse, when only fifteen years of age, in the following stanzas:

Through thy battlements, Newstead, hollow winds whistle,
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once-smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
Have choak'd up the rose, which late bloom'd in the way.

Of the mail-cover'd barons, who proudly to battle
Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine's plain,
The escutcheon and shield, which every blast rattle,
Are the only sad vestiges now that remain.

Sir John Byron, who dislodged the monks of the Abbey of Newstead, left that and his other possessions to his fourth son of the same name, on whom Queen Elizabeth bestowed the honour of knighthood, in 1579. His eldest son, Sir Nicholas, served with distinction in the Low Country wars; and when the great Rebellion broke out, he was one of the first to take up arms in the defence of the Royal cause. After the battle of Edge Hill, where he displayed his courage, he was made Governor of Chester, which city he defended gallantly against the Parliamentarians, though at last he fell into their hands. Lord Clarendon speaks highly of his character, and of the exertions made by him in Cheshire to assist the king. "He was," says the noble historian, "a person of great affability and dexterity, as well as martial knowledge, which gave great life to the designs of the well-affected, and, with the encouragement of some

gentlemen of North Wales, he in a short time raised such a power of horse and foot, as made frequent skirmishes with the enemy, sometimes with notable advantage, never with signal loss."

Sir John Byron, the younger brother of Sir Nicholas, was made Knight of the Bath, at the coronation of King James the First. He married Anne, the eldest daughter of Sir Richard Molyneux, Bart. by whom he had eleven sons and a daughter. The eldest of the sons served under his uncle in the Low Countries, and in 1641, when the House of Commons complained against Colonel Lunsford, as being an unfit person to be governor of the Tower, the King appointed this Sir John Byron to that office. In a short time, however, the new Lieutenant became no less obnoxious to the refractory spirits in the city and parliament, than his predecessor; and he was ordered to attend at the bar of the House, to answer certain charges alleged against him by the sectaries. Sir John, instead of complying with this mandate, refused peremptorily to leave his post without the king's command. Upon this the Commons applied to the Lords, to join them in a petition to the King, praying him to remove Sir

John Byron; but though the Peers in other respects gave too much way to the encroachments of the Lower House, they had firmness enough in this instance to reject the proposition. The City, however, petitioned the King on this subject, and, among other grievances, complained of the "preparations made in the Tower, and the calling of divers cannoniers into that fortress." To this his Majesty replied, that "for the Tower, he wondered that, having removed a servant of good trust and reputation from that charge, only to satisfy the fears of the City, and put in another of unquestionable reputation and known ability, the petitioners should still entertain those fears."

But some time afterwards the King, from a disposition to conciliate the malcontents, thought proper to remove Sir John Byron, who in the summer of 1642 was employed in escorting the plate contributed by the University of Oxford, for his royal master's use. This important trust he discharged with such satisfaction, that the learned body conferred on him, the same year, the honorary degree of Doctor in the Civil Law. Shortly after this he bore a distinguished part in the battle of Edge Hill; as also in

that of Newbury, where six of his brothers, besides himself, were actively engaged. For these services Sir John Byron received a patent of peerage, dated at Oxford, October 24, 1643, creating him Baron Byron, of Rochdale, in the County of Lancaster, with the remainder of the title to his brothers, and their male issue respectively.

As a farther testimony of the royal favour, Lord Byron was made Field-Marshal-General of all his Majesty's forces in Worcestershire, Shropshire, Cheshire, and North Wales; and when his uncle Sir Nicholas was made prisoner by the rebels, he was appointed to the government of the city of Chester in his room. In this capacity he rendered great service to the Royal cause, particularly by defeating Sir Thomas Fairfax, and relieving Montgomery Castle, for which the Parliament passed a vote, excepting him from pardon and sequestrating his estates. On the other hand, the King reposed the most entire confidence in this loyal subject, and appointed him governor to the Duke of York, with whom he escaped to Holland, when the unfortunate Monarch became a prisoner in the Isle of Wight. Lord Byron after-

wards accompanied his royal pupil in Flanders, under the immortal Turenne; but he did not long survive that campaign, dying at Paris in 1652. Though married twice, he left no issue, and was succeeded in the title and estates by his second brother, Sir Richard Byron, who was knighted by Charles the First, for his conduct at the battle of Edge Hill. He was also appointed governor first of Appleby Castle, in Westmoreland, and next of Newark, which place he defended with great honour. This second Lord Byron died in 1679, and was succeeded by his eldest son William, who married Elizabeth the daughter of John Viscount Chaworth of the kingdom of Ireland; by whom he had five sons, all of whom died young, except William, the fourth lord, born in 1669. He became Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark, with whom he was a great favourite. His first wife, Mary, daughter of John Earl of Bridgewater, died of the small pox, eleven weeks after her nuptials. By his second wife, the daughter of William Bentinck Earl of Portland, he had three sons, who all died before their father. His third wife, Frances, daughter of William Lord Berkeley, of Stratton, brought him five sons and a daughter.

William the eldest son, born in 1722, succeeded to the family honours on the death of his father, in 1736. He entered into the naval service, and became lieutenant of the Victory, under Admiral Balchen; which ship he had but just left, before she was lost on the rocks of Alderney. In 1763, he was made Master of the Stag-hounds; but in 1765, he was sent to the Tower, and tried before the House of Peers, for killing his relation and neighbour, Mr. Chaworth, in a duel fought at the Star and Garter Tavern, in Pall-Mall. It appeared in evidence, that Lord Byron's passions, which were at all times boisterous, carried him so far in the dispute with Mr. Chaworth, that nothing would satisfy him, short of fighting in the room where the quarrel commenced. They accordingly fought, by the dim light of a single candle, and Mr. Chaworth, who was the less skilful of the two, received a mortal wound. He lived long enough, however, to make his will, and to impart some particulars, which induced the coroner's jury to return a verdict of wilful murder against the noble lord; who, on the 16th of April, took his trial in Westminster Hall; when the public curiosity was so great, that tickets of admission were publicly sold for six gui-

neas, and found eager purchasers. The trial lasted two days; and at the conclusion, all the peers present, amounting to about two hundred and fifty, pronounced the prisoner guilty of manslaughter; but on being brought up for judgment, he pleaded his privilege, and was discharged. This lord married Elizabeth the daughter of Charles Shaw, Esq. of Besthorp Hall, in the County of Norfolk, by whom he had three sons; but all of them died without issue before their father, who departed this life at Newstead Abbey, May 17, 1798.

One of the most remarkable members of this celebrated family was the Honourable John Byron, second son of William, the fourth lord, by his third wife. He was born at Newstead Abbey, on the 8th of November, 1723; and at an early age entered into the naval service, in which he suffered more hardships perhaps than any man of his time. In 1740, he embarked as a midshipman on board the Wager, one of the ships fitted out for an expedition to the South Seas, under the command of Commodore Anson. The Wager was an old Indiaman, and was purchased by Government to serve as a store-ship; so that, being very deeply

laden, she sailed heavily, and was incapable of keeping company with the rest of the squadron. In a squall of wind, off the southernmost mouth of the straits Le Maire, she lost sight of all her companions, and soon afterwards carried away her mizen mast. The commander, Captain Cheap, then endeavoured to make the island of Soccoro, the appointed place of rendezvous, but in vain; for the gale increased to such a degree that no exertions of the crew could prevent the ship from falling upon a lee shore; where, the rudder and tiller being gone, she struck between two rocks. This was in the middle of the night; and when day broke, the people got the boats out; but Mr. Byron, who with the captain went on shore, could not save a single article of his clothes, except what he had on his back. The land was, if possible, more dreadful than the sea, nothing appearing all around but a wild solitude, alike destitute of animals and vegetation. This dismal spot lay to the northward of the Straits of Magellan; but whether it formed part of an island or of the continent, the sufferers had no means of determining. From the wreck so little was saved at first, that when the people landed, they had no more than two or three pounds of biscuit-dust and a sea-

gull as a breakfast, to be divided among one hundred and forty men, after having been without food eight-and-forty hours. To such a pitch of misery were they at last reduced, that the gallinaso, the carrion crow of this inhospitable coast, which occasionally came to devour the carcases of the drowned men on the shore, was regarded as a dainty. Some Indians, who rowed into the bay, brought them a few trifling articles, and some provisions were obtained from the vessel; but not in a sufficient quantity to supply the present necessities of the men, who to increase their misfortune, had, on the first striking of the ship among the breakers, made free with all the stores and liquors they could find. All order was at an end; and while one party resolved to pursue a wild journey into the interior, another body determined upon seizing the long boat, which they at last did, leaving the captain, whom they hated, behind. Mr. Byron joined these adventurers; but on discovering their intentions towards the captain, he quitted them; though in so doing he became exposed to the horror of starving, for the fugitives were so unfeeling that they carried away with them every morsel of food that could be obtained from the hull of the wreck. The number remaining on the

island, for such it was now found to be, amounted to twenty; and the only boats they had left, were the barge and yawl. Of the distress to which they were reduced some idea may be formed from the circumstance, that Mr. Byron had an Indian dog, to which he became much attached, but nothing could prevail with the crew to spare the animal from slaughter; and three weeks after this the owner himself was glad to make a meal of the rotten paws and skin which he found on the place where the poor creature had been killed. Among other devices which the seamen had recourse to for a precarious subsistence, one of the most remarkable was that of the boatswain's mate, who having got a water-cask, scuttled it, and lashing it to two logs, made a sort of boat, with which he put out to sea, and succeeded in getting fish and wild fowl, when his comrades on shore were starving. To get away from this inhospitable clime, which, as a great writer says, seems to have been cast aside from human use, the captain came to a resolution of embarking in the two boats, with the hope of being able to reach the island of Chiloe. The attempt was made; but after a struggle of two months, during which the crews lived upon seal,

sea-weed, and tangle, they were driven back by the force of the current to Wager's Island, the place from whence they set out. Their fate appeared now to be fixed, when two canoes arrived with a party of Indians, headed by the chief of a tribe in the neighbourhood of Chiloe. With him an agreement was made, that he should have the barge, and all that had been saved from the wreck on the condition of conducting the people up the creeks and across the bays by which he had himself reached the island. They accordingly embarked once more in the barge, being now reduced to thirteen in number, and entered on a voyage to which there are not many parallels in the history of nautical hardships. To such extremities were they reduced in attempting to force the barge against a rapid stream, that when one of the stoutest of the sailors fell from the oar, exhausted by labour and the want of food, the captain refused to give him a morsel, though he had a large piece of boiled seal by him, so hardened was he become by the familiarity of distress. Mr. Byron was the only one who, having a few dried shell-fish in his pocket, from time to time dropped one into the poor fellow's mouth—an act of kindness which only prolonged his torture, but

not his life. Their attempt to get up the river being fruitless, a party went on shore, and penetrated into the morasses in search of some sustenance; but on their return, six of the remaining crew, with an Indian, advanced hastily and put off, leaving the Captain, Mr. Byron, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Elliot, never to return.

Their misfortunes now seemed to have attained the utmost point of desperate misery; but at this moment Providence relieved them, by the arrival of a canoe, the Indians on board of which agreed to take them up the river. After toiling at their oars three days, they came to a carrying place, where it being necessary for the party to proceed on foot, each person had some load; and Mr. Byron had allotted to him a wet heavy piece of stinking seal, wrapped up in canvas belonging to the captain. Their way was through a thick wood, and a swamp, where every step sunk the person almost to the middle. In this dismal place Mr. Byron was left behind, by falling from a tree into some water, where he narrowly escaped being drowned. With some difficulty he extricated himself; but, on joining his companions, Captain Cheap

reproached him so seriously for losing his piece of seal, that he voluntarily went back five miles to recover it. Notwithstanding this heroic act of generosity, the captain and the whole party embarked without taking Mr. Byron with them when he returned; and, what was still more inhuman in this brutal commander, he did not even leave the youth a morsel of the stinking seal for which he had endured such hardship and had nearly paid his life. Night coming on, and being quite worn out with fatigue and hunger, he there lay down, and fell asleep. Before day he awoke, and hearing some voices at a little distance, he went towards the spot whence the sound proceeded, and found a wigwam, or Indian hut, into which he entered, though not till he had received some blows for his intrusion. The Indians, however, were soon reconciled to him, and he embarked with them in their canoe; but when they hauled up to the shore at night, they all disappeared, and left him alone in a dark, dismal desert, amidst a violent storm of rain. The next day the party returned, and took him with them to a place, where finding a quantity of limpets, he filled his hat with them; but the Indians were so enraged at his throwing the shells overboard, that he

had some difficulty to prevent them from doing the same by himself. In a few days Mr. Byron rejoined his company; and soon afterwards they landed in the island of Chiloe, at the imminent hazard of their lives. The natives received them very kindly, and the women, in particular, strove who should contribute most to the comfort of the poor shipwrecked mariners, who on their part were so ravenous that they did nothing but eat for the whole day together: and such was the impression of his privations on the mind of Mr. Byron, that for several months he could not avoid pocketing all the victuals that he could lay his hands upon. From Chiloe they were conveyed by a Spanish guard to Castro, and thence to Chaco, where the niece of an old priest fell in love with Mr. Byron; and the uncle, so far from disapproving of it, offered the favoured youth to settle all his property upon him, provided he would marry the lady. This proposition, however, tempting as it was under all the circumstances in which he stood, Mr. Byron had the fortitude to decline. At the beginning of 1743, they were sent off to Valparaiso, and next to St. Jago, the capital of Chili, where Mr. Byron was hospitably entertained near two years by Dr. Gedd, a Scotch physician. In

the month of December 1744, they were put on board the Lys, a French frigate, which did not reach the harbour of Brest till the 27th of October, 1745. After some time Mr. Byron and his companions obtained a passage in a Dutch vessel, which landed them at Dover; but so completely were their finances exhausted, that they had not wherewithal to pay the turnpikes as they came to London, where they arrived at the beginning of 1746.

Having passed through the several gradations of service, Mr. Byron, in 1758, was appointed commodore of a small squadron in the channel; and soon after he was despatched to North America, as commander of the British ships at Louisburg, the fortifications of which place he demolished, pursuant to his orders, and then removed the stores to Halifax.

It is well known that the first object of his late Majesty on ascending the throne, was to restore the blessing of peace, that he might be enabled to promote the interests of science. Accordingly, when the war terminated, the king turned his attention to the favourite idea, which had long occupied his thoughts—

that of ascertaining whether there existed a southern continent. Upon this point, Lord Egmont, then at the head of the Admiralty, was consulted; and after some deliberation and inquiry it was determined that a voyage of discovery should be undertaken, and that Commodore Byron was the fittest person to conduct the expedition. He sailed from the Downs, on the 21st of June, 1764, with two ships, the Dolphin and the Tamar. In ranging along that coast where he had suffered such dreadful hardships, the commodore observed, near the entrance of the Straits of Magellan, a number of people on the shore, who made signs for an interview. With this invitation he complied, and met with a most friendly reception from the Indians, who were above five hundred in number, and of a gigantic stature. On the 14th of January, 1765, the commodore took possession of the principal of Falkland's Islands, which afterwards had nearly produced a war between this country and Spain. Having accomplished this part of his mission, and explored the coast, the English commander passed through the Magellanic Straits, and entered the Great Pacific Ocean, where he discovered some new islands, to one of which his name was given by the officers; and in

the month of May, 1766, after having circumnavigated the globe, the two ships came to anchor in the Downs.

In 1775, this gallant officer was promoted to the rank of admiral; and in the spring of 1778, he was despatched with thirteen ships of the line, in pursuit of the French fleet, which had sailed from Brest to North America, under the command of D'Estaing. In his passage the English admiral encountered such severe weather, that several of his ships suffered much, and the whole were separated. After this D'Estaing got out from Boston, and sailed for the West Indies, whither he was followed by Admiral Byron, but without his being able to get up with the enemy, who lay secure for several months in the harbour of Martinique. Such was the ill-fortune of this brave commander, that the seamen, who with all their courage are remarkably superstitious, regarded him as one born under an evil planet, and gave him the appellation of "foul-weather Jack." Yet personally no officer in the service was better beloved by those who served under him; for he was kind to all, and remarkably attentive to the comforts of the common men,

of which a striking proof appeared in his voyage round the world, during which by his care he prevented the scurvy from making any ravages in his ships.

At the close of the American war he retired to domestic life; in which, however, he was almost as unfortunate as in his professional career. In 1748, he married the daughter of John Trevannion, Esq. of Carhays, in the County of Cornwall, by whom he had two sons and three daughters; one of which last married her cousin William, the eldest son of the fifth Lord Byron, but had no issue by him, and died in 1788; two years after her father, the admiral.

John Byron the eldest son of the brave veteran, a sketch of whose life we have just given, was born in 1751. He received a liberal education at Westminster School; after which his father purchased for him a commission in the Guards, where he obtained the rank of captain; but his life was so irregular, that the admiral, though a very good-natured man, discarded him long before his death. To be seen in the company of Jack Byron was enough to bring the charac-

ter of any man or woman into suspicion, for he was a spendthrift, a gambler, and a debauchee.

In 1778, an affair happened which occasioned much noise in the upper circles of life, and brought the subject of this narrative before the public, in a manner that excited more than common indignation. The late Duke of Leeds, then Marquess of Carmarthen, married in 1773, Amelia, the only daughter of the Earl of Holdernesse, and never to appearance was there a happier couple. Two or three years after the marriage, the marquess was taken with a violent fever at Bath, when such was the anxiety of his lady, that she watched by him herself, both day and night, with an assiduity of attention that brought her own life in danger. The Marquess was not insensible to this proof of affection, which he endeavoured to repay, after his recovery, by a correspondent concern for the happiness of one who had shown so much regard for him, in the hour of danger.

They lived together after this in the utmost harmony; and any insinuation reflecting upon the fidelity

of the lady, would have drawn from her lord the keenest expressions of insulted honour. Yet while the Marquess was thus wrapped up in the fullest confidence of his partner's virtue, those around them saw a strange alteration in the deportment of her ladyship. Her intimacy with Jack Byron excited surprise, in all who knew the profligacy of his character; and as he took no pains to keep his conquest a secret, the illicit connexion was soon hinted abroad. The Marquess could not avoid hearing of the reports that were in circulation; but such was his opinion of his wife's affection for him, manifested so strongly in his late illness; so fully was he persuaded of the innate purity of her mind, fortified by the principles of religion, and the noble example of her parents, that he treated the rumours which were spread about, as the malignant effusions of envy, contrived by wicked minds to destroy his felicity. But this incredulity on the part of the husband, and his unabated kindness amidst the talk which his consort's behaviour had produced, facilitated a complete detection, by throwing the criminal parties off their guard. One day when the Marquess was in the country, her ladyship delivered a letter to her footman to carry to Captain

Byron. This epistle she had the imprudence to seal with a wafer, which was still wet; so that the trusty Hermes had no trouble in reading the contents. Finding that the billet contained an appointment, the man, instead of conveying it to the place of destination, carried it to Lord Holdernesse, whose agitation was so great on this shocking discovery, that he made it known to the Countess. Lady Holdernesse immediately repaired to her daughter, whom she taxed with her infidelity, which she as resolutely denied, till the fatal letter was produced, and then she fell into a fit. A scene followed that no language can describe; but upon promises of repentance, the matter was hushed up, the servant who made the discovery was silenced, and the Marquess for that time had no intimation of his dishonour; yet it was impossible that he could be kept altogether ignorant of a conduct which was the subject of general remark. Though, therefore, he could not believe what the world roundly asserted, he now deemed it prudent to remain in the country, and to set a watch upon the movements of the Marchioness. Two gentlemen of tried honour and friendship were employed upon this delicate service; and they were not long engaged on

the post of observation, till they brought the guilt of her ladyship to the test of evidence. At this time, Byron was in the country; and having, as was usual with him, pressing occasion for a sum of money, he wrote to the Marchioness for a supply.

She immediately despatched to him a packet, containing notes to the amount of one hundred pounds, which fell into the hands of the two spies, who had now an unequivocal demonstration of her ladyship's infidelity, for the letter contained the most ardent expressions of affection, and a pressing entreaty that her paramour would hasten to town, to take advantage of the absence of the Marquess. The Captain did indeed hurry up to London, not, however, in consequence of the invitation, but because he had received no answer to his letter—the interception of which was a thunderbolt to both; for, it afforded a certain proof, that their guilt was now made known to him, whom they had so grossly injured. In this dilemma, they came to the resolution of repairing to the Continent; and with that view, her Ladyship wrote to the Marquess, for leave to draw money from his banker. To this request she received no answer, which only served

to hasten the determination of elopement; and they accordingly set off for Dover in a chaise and four: but just as they were about to enter the packet, the two friends of the Marquess arrived, and brought the Lady back to London, whither she was followed, at a respectful distance, by her disappointed lover. Soon after their arrival in town, her Ladyship again found means to escape; and as nothing more could be done to hide the shame, legal proceedings were adopted, the consequence of which was, a separation *a mensa et thoro;* and next, an act of parliament followed, by which the marriage of the Marquess of Carmarthen and Amelia D'Arcy was dissolved. This was in May, 1779, and soon after, as the only means that could be devised to patch up a broken reputation, the friends on both sides interposed to bring about a marriage between her Ladyship and Captain Byron, which was effected; but it turned out unhappily, for the season of pleasure was over, and the dregs of illicit love were become gall and wormwood. The mind of the new husband was vitiated, and his manners were brutal; he had no relish for rational amusement, or for the comforts of domestic life; and, therefore, it can excite no wonder, that within two years the

ill-fated Amelia should have died literally of a broken heart, after giving birth to two daughters, one of whom only survived her mother.

In 1785, Mr. Byron took for a second wife, Miss Gordon, a Scotch lady of noble descent, being nearly allied to the Ducal House of that name, and herself heiress to an estate at Rayne, in the district of Garioch, near Aberdeen; which, however, fell a prey to the extravagances of her husband, who then cruelly abandoned his wife and child, and, to avoid his creditors, went to Valenciennes, where he died on the second of August, 1791. His widow lived long enough to see her son received into the House of Lords, as the legitimate claimant of the Barony of Byron; but though she had the pleasure also to witness the opening of his splendid talents, she was denied the satisfaction of embracing him in her last moments, dying in Scotland, while he was on his travels, in 1811.

CHAPTER II.

Early life of Lord Byron.—Character of Isabella, Countess of Carlisle.—His Lordship's studies at Harrow, and respect for his Tutor.—His opinion of the poetic Classics controverted.—Removal to Cambridge, and reflections upon that University.

ON the death of William, the fifth Lord Byron, without male issue, the title and estates, at least those which remained attached to the barony, devolved upon George Gordon, the only son of the last-mentioned John Byron, then a child of ten years old, being born January 22, 1788.

The old lord lived many years, after his unfortunate affair with Mr. Chaworth, a life of absolute seclusion in the country, hated by his tenantry, at war with his neighbours, and separated from all his family. He

suffered the paternal mansion to fall into a state of ruin; and, as far as lay in his power, he alienated the lands which should have kept it in repair. Eccentricity, indeed, seems to have distinguished the whole blood; for his sister Isabella, late Countess of Carlisle, and mother of the present earl, was a woman of singular genius, and as singular habits. She wrote a charming copy of verses, addressed to Mrs. Greville, on her "Ode to Indifference," which, with other poetical effusions of her ladyship's pen, are in Pearch's collection. After shining for a long period in the circle of fashion as one of its most lively and fascinating luminaries, she suddenly retired, and in a manner shut herself up from the world; which made the late Mr. Fox, in one of his sportive productions, characterize her severely enough, as

"Carlisle recluse in pride and rags."

Of the talents of her son the public has long possessed ample proofs, in a volume of poems, and the nervous tragedy of "The Father's Revenge;" which last was submitted to the judgment of Dr. Johnson, a little before his death, and received his approbation.

But to return to the immediate subject of these Memoirs. His infant years, from the age of two to ten, were spent at the birth-place of his mother, and under her personal care; which was of so lenient and indulgent a cast, that perhaps much of the irregularity which has marked his progress through life, may be ascribed to the want of early restraint, and seasonable discipline. A mal-formation of one of his feet, and other indications of a rickety constitution, served as a plea for suffering him to range the hills, and to wander about at his pleasure on the sea-shore, that his frame might be invigorated by air and exercise. But if much was gained in bodily strength, it was at the expense of mental cultivation; and this early custom of roaming at will, became a confirmed habit, and a disposition impatient of controul.

When the right to the family honours was determined, and the young minor became a ward under the guardianship of his relation, the Earl of Carlisle, an order was made for his removal to an English seminary, that he might have an education suited to his rank. Harrow was pitched upon, and thither he was sent, towards the close of the year 1798. The re-

strictions of a well-regulated school were seriously felt by one who had never before experienced the least abridgement of his freedoom, and whose desires had always been gratified to such a degree that to him even the language of authority was hardly known. A mind so ill prepared for the trammels of education, could not easily be brought into a state of conformity with the established regulations of the institution; and though the usual exercises were correctly performed, it was with reluctance and an avowed hatred both to the task and the authority by which it was enforced. That he did not acquire a classical taste at this celebrated seat of the Muses, where Jones and Sheridan first tried their powers, is certain, for we have his own testimony to the fact. The fourth canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" contains a bitter anathema against the use of the Latin poets in schools, followed by a long note upon the same subject. The lines, which possess neither strength nor harmony, are these:

> "May he who will, his recollections rake
> And quote in classic raptures, and awake
> The hills with Latian echoes: I abhorr'd
> Too much to conquer, for the poet's sake,
> The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word,
> In my repugnant youth, with pleasure, to record."

As an apology for this admitted defect, and in justification of the contempt put upon classic allusions, the noble author makes these observations :—

" I wish to express, that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote, before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed, by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish, or to reason upon. For the same reason, we never can be aware of the fulness of some of the finest passages of Shakspeare, ('To be, or not to be,' for instance,) from the habit of having them hammered into us at eight years old, as an exercise, not of mind, but of memory; so that when we are old enough to enjoy them, the taste is gone, and the appetite palled. In some parts of the Continent young persons are taught from more common authors, and do not read the best classics till their maturity. I certainly do not speak on this point from any pique or aversion towards the place of my education. I

was not a slow, though an idle boy; and I believe no one could be more attached to Harrow than I have always been, and with reason:—a part of the time passed there was the happiest of my life; and my preceptor (the Reverend Dr. Joseph Drury) was the best and worthiest friend I ever possessed, whose warnings I have remembered but too well, though too late, when I have erred; and whose counsels I have but followed when I have done well and wisely. If ever this imperfect record of my feelings towards him should reach his eyes, let it remind him of one who never thinks of him but with gratitude and veneration, —of one who would more gladly boast of having been his pupil, if by more closely following his injunctions he could reflect any honour upon his instructor."

Pleasing as this tribute of gratitude is, it would have been more so had the noble author forborne to satirize in the coarsest strain of rude invective, by the appellation of Pomposus, the head master of the same seminary, for no other cause in the world than that of having enforced, without any relaxation in favour of individuals, the statutes of the house over which he presided.

But it is the sweeping censure passed upon the system of instruction adopted in all our grammar-schools that calls for particular notice and animadversion. If the attainment of Latin and Greek is at all necessary, it is obvious that those languages cannot be acquired in perfection, but through the medium of the finest writers, as well in verse as in prose.

What the late Dean Vincent has observed on this subject in his admirable "Defence of Public Education," is so decisive of the question that it is only to be regretted that the author of Childe Harold should have been ignorant of a tract, the perusal of which would have saved him from falling under the keen remark, that "he who writes with the Goths, cannot thoroughly feel with the Classics."

Having remarked that Milton, Cowley, and Addison had distinguished themselves by their paradoxical opinions in regard to education, Dr. Vincent takes their reflections in order.—

"MILTON," says he, "complained of the years that were wasted in teaching the dead languages, and

proposed a more compendious method of his own; but Johnson, who had taught these languages himself, observes that no man can teach faster than a boy can learn. We know nothing of Milton's success; for not a name of all his pupils is upon record: but we know what the brightest luminaries of the age issued from the school of Busby; and we know that to form the habits of literature, time is required as well as teaching.

"COWLEY complained that classical education taught *words* only, and not *things;* but it ought to be considered that all the instruction of childhood depends more on memory than intellect. When the age of comprehension comes, from twelve or fourteen to sixteen or eighteen, if the master teaches only words, he is a blockhead. It is the composition of the poet he is to notice, and not the rendering a word of the original by its correspondent term in English; the order, connexion, and relation of part to part, the allusions to history, mythology, and geography; and if these are not things rather than words, where are we to search for them?

"ADDISON deemed it an inexpiable error, that boys, with genius or without, were all to be bred poet indiscriminately; and if this were our object in teaching prosody, his reproof would be just; but no ear can be formed to harmony, no poet can be read with pleasure, no intimate acquaintance with any dead language can be obtained, without a knowledge of prosody."

While Lord Byron was at school, one of the living ornaments of that seminary printed, though he did not publish, "An Invocation to the Harrow Muses, to defend the use of the Heathen Mythology, in Poetry."

Whether the author of Childe Harold had this poem in his eye when he spoke so contemptuously of "Latian echoes," is a question which cannot be discussed in this place; but the reader of sensibility, it is apprehended, will not be displeased with some lines from a performance conceived in the genuine strain of classic taste and genuine poesy:

"I will not from remembrance blot the lays
Which Harrow echo'd in my younger days—

Those days, in which your votaries loved to rove
Through the dark windings of the sacred grove;*
Or where the steeple rises to the view,
Or where, in earlier times, the arrow flew:†
Then oft, upon some bank, from sorrow free,
Or at the roots we sat of some old tree,
There hail'd the flocks and herds that wander'd nigh,
Or hymn'd the smiling hours that fleeted by:
As yet our youthful passions were not strong,
And few the opportunities of wrong;
But rash adventures (when th' appointed bound
Our feet o'erleapt, and trod forbidden ground),
Or themes in haste perform'd (a heinous crime),
Or verse unfinish'd at the stated time,
Soon follow'd punishment; nor, that once o'er,
The fault, which caused it, was remember'd more.
Past scenes! which, while in manhood we pursue
Life's toilsome march, with fondness we review:
Now constant care fills up the present hour,
With schemes for future wealth, or distant pow'r;
Now, if we pass in idleness the day,
Or from our road, allured by pleasure, stray,
Stern Conscience frowns, an unrelenting foe,
Holds her dread scourge on high, but still delays the blow."

* The Grove was the name of a garden at Harrow, in which the upper boys were allowed by the owner to walk.

† A place on Harrow Hill, called the Butts, where the ceremony of shooting for the arrow was performed, before that custom was abolished, and the speeches instituted in its stead.

Though the author of Childe Harold could pronounce an anathema against Horace, and the use made of the poets in education, his earliest and best productions are indebted for their harmony and expression to that knowledge of the classics in his youth, which he so strangely condemns in his latter work. One of his warm, but not blind, admirers, has noticed this in the piece intituled "Childe Harold's Monitor," where the noble poet's treatment of Horace is censured with just severity.

"No lover of the classics," says that powerful writer, "can speak with more lip-honour of Horace, than Harold has done in that objectionable passage of his fourth Canto, to which he has solicited the attention of his reader by an ingenious but most injudicious note. But, if he really did, as he imagines, understand the Lyric Bard of the Latins, it would be impossible for him, with all his feeling, not to enter into the spirit of that divine poet. This doctrine of antipathies, contracted by the impatience of youth against the noblest authors of antiquity, from the circumstance of their having been made the vehicles of early instruction, is a most dangerous doctrine indeed; since it strikes at the root not only of all

pure taste, but of all praiseworthy industry. It would, if acted upon, (as Harold, by his mention of the Continental practice of using inferior writers in the business of tuition, would seem to recommend,) destroy the great source of intellectual vigour of our countrymen. The labour of acquiring the learned languages, salutary as that labour is to the whole understanding, is acknowledged to be considerable: and if it is not to be cheered by the delightful inspirations of ancient genius; if the digger in the mine of philology is not to be enlivened by the accompanying song of classical poets; there is no other digger, or hedger, or ditcher, who is denied so natural and necessary a recreation—

—— Solatur carmine fossor opus ——

" Many a would-be genius will hereafter eagerly shelter himself under the authority of Harold, and pronounce it a proof of original fancy, and strong ungovernable powers of mind, to be unable to submit to the drudgery of penetrating into the sense of Horace; and the simple and appropriate panegyric of Pope will lose all its veracity, as far as the reader is concerned—

" Horace still charms with graceful negligence," &c.

"It is probable, that among the occasions which Harold commemorates so gratefully and so honourably, both to himself and to his preceptor Dr. Drury,—occasions on which that preceptor gave his pupil good advice,—that there was no failure of encomium upon Horace, nor any want of encouragement to study his useful and animating pages. 'Ille se profecisse sciet, cui Horatius valde placebit,' may be said perhaps as truly of this as of any author of antiquity. When will men of real genius feel their responsibility, and weigh what they are doing, when about to set a licentious example? 'Exemplar VITIIS imitabile,' should be their constant motto and monitor."

Previous to leaving Harrow, it will be no more than justice to the youthful genius and feelings of its noble Poet, to quote a few lines from one of his earliest pieces, entitled, "Childish Recollections," but which most readers of sensibility will regard with concern, as the promising shoots of a fancy that has since suffered much by luxuriance.

"Yet why should I alone with such delight
Retrace the circuit of my former flight?
Is there no cause beyond the common claim,
Endear'd to all, in childhood's very name?

Ah! sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which, whispers Friendship, will be doubly dear
To one who thus with kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad the love denied at home:
Those hearts, dear Ida,* have I found in thee—
A home, a world, a Paradise to me.
Stern Death forbade my orphan youth to share
The tender guidance of a father's care;
Can rank, or e'en a guardian's name, supply
The love which glistens in a father's eye?
For this can wealth or title's sound alone,
Made, by a parent's early loss, my own?
What brother springs a brother's love to seek?
What sister's gentle kiss has press'd my cheek?
For me how dull the vacant moments rise,
To no fond bosom link'd by kindred ties."

At the age of little more than sixteen, the author of these verses removed to the University of Cambridge, where he became a student of Trinity College.

Of the pursuits which occupied his time during the short period of his continuance in this venerable seat of learning not much can be said; since it appears that he despised academical honours, and treated with contempt the peculiar studies by which alone

* Harrow.

they could be procured. The same indolence that characterized him at school, distinguished him in college; but though he paid little attention to the classics, and had an abhorrence for mathematics, he read the English poets with avidity, and exercised his genius in writing verses, chiefly of an amatory description. His turn for satire also at this period appears in the sketches which he has drawn of a collegiate life, and of the labours of the candidate for public prizes. But however excusable these light productions may be, no palliative can be found for the author, who after leaving the university could vent his spleen against her in these venemous lines:

> "Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race,
> At once the boast of learning, and disgrace.'

As an illustration of this foul aspersion, a passage from Gibbon is quoted where the historian says, that "into Cambridgeshire the emperor Probus transported a considerable body of Vandals:"—after giving which notable extract the satirist observes, that "there is no reason to doubt the truth of this assertion; for the breed is still in high perfection."

There are four other lines in the same poem, which betray a malignity of mind, that is difficult to account for, but on the ground of its having been excited by resentment of coercion inflicted or distinctions withheld:

> "Ye, who in Granta's honours would surpass,
> Must mount her Pegasus, a full-grown ass;
> A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
> Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam."

Instances of similar calumny upon a University, by one of its members, are of rare occurrence; for in general men, however irregular their conduct may have been, feel interested in the glory of the seminary where they were bred.

Milton, it is true, who had been subjected to the severity of academic discipline, complained in some Latin verses, that the banks of the Cam were unpropitious to Phœbus; but this querulousness arose from a hatred of the government, and not a dislike to the studies, of the University.

Gibbon, in the Memoirs of his own life, has done

Oxford the honour of abusing her entire constitution, as monastic; but the diatribe of the luminous historian is rendered nugatory by his own confession that he was an unfledged school-boy when he became a gentleman-commoner of Magdalen College; that he knew little Latin, and no Greek; and that of his whole academic life, which consisted only of fourteen months, one half was wasted in truant excursions.

With respect to Lord Byron, we have his own admission, that neither his habits nor connexions were such as to ensure him the esteem of those of his contemporaries who, valuing most highly their relation to the University, could not but feel hurt at every indignity put upon its institutes.

In the same poem which has called forth these remarks, his Lordship, to make his sting more severe against the reputation of Cambridge, throws out a far-fetched compliment upon Oxford, in these lines:

> "But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
> The partial Muse delighted loves to lave;
> On her green banks a greener wreath is wove,
> To crown the Bards that haunt her classic grove."

Reflecting, however, upon the purpose for which this comparison was made, and sensible that the character of one learned establishment is not to be supported by an invidious contrast with another, the friends of Oxford could hardly be gratified by praises which so forcibly reminded them of Gibbon's illiberal sarcasms, and the truth of the maxim that,

Non talis auxilio, nec defensoribus istis.

CHAPTER III.

Publication of the "Hours of Idleness;"—Critique of the Edinburgh Reviewers thereon; and the noble Author's severe retort.

AT the age of nineteen, Lord Byron left the University for Newstead Abbey, the seat of his ancestors, where, at the importunity of friends, he made a small collection of those poems which having been circulated privately had excited considerable interest. The volume accordingly appeared the same year, from the neighbouring printing-press of Newark; to which however the execution did little honour in point of correctness or elegance. The title "Hours of Idleness," given to the book, cannot be considered otherwise than as an affectation unworthy of the author; inasmuch as it implies a contempt of poesy, while at the same time the

very publication manifested the importance attached to the art in his estimation, and the laudable ambition of excellency in it, by which he was actuated. That a noble youth in his minority could conceive himself to be "idly employed," when cultivating an intimacy with the Muses, is too ridiculous to be believed; and the keen resentment which he afterwards felt against the critics who endeavoured to blight these early blossoms of his genius, afforded a decisive proof that he was not sincere in his humility. Neither indeed would it have been much to his honour if the title which he adopted had corresponded with his real sentiments; since writing verses is at all events as good an application of time, to say nothing of the exercise of the mind, as chasing a fox, driving a coach, or rattling the dice. Whether a young man of family and rank may be better employed than in poetic composition is not the question; but certain it is that the hours so devoted, cannot in any sense be called those of idleness. This designation of the juvenile performances of Lord Byron, bears some resemblance to the behaviour of Congreve, who told Voltaire that he wished to be visited as a gentleman, and not as a poet. "Had I considered you only as a gentleman," ob-

served the French wit, "I certainly should never have visited you at all."

The volume bearing this unlucky title was inscribed very properly, and very respectfully, to the author's noble relative and guardian the Earl of Carlisle, himself a poet and a man of learning. But though the dedication is highly complimentary to his lordship's virtues and genius, on some account or other, for which it would be difficult to assign a satisfactory reason, the young poet in his next and most vigorous performance, thought proper to abuse the noble earl, in the bitterest gall and wormwood of satire; as one

"Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse."

In justification of this marvellous inconsistency the author offers the following plea:

"It may be asked why I have censured the Earl of Carlisle, my guardian and relative, to whom I dedicated a volume of puerile poems some years ago. The guardianship was nominal, at least as far as I have been able to discover; the relationship I cannot help, and am very sorry for it; but, as his lordship

seemed to forget it on a very essential occasion to me, I shall not burden my memory with the recollection. I do not think that personal differences sanction the unjust condemnation of a brother scribbler; but I see no reason why they should act as a preventive, when the author, noble or ignoble, has for a series of years beguiled a "discerning public" (as the advertisements have it) with divers reams of most orthodox, imperial nonsense. Besides, I do not step aside to vituperate the Earl; no—his works come fairly in review with those of other Patrician Literati. If, before I escaped from my teens, I said any thing in favour of his lordship's paper books, it was in the way of dutiful dedication, and more from the advice of others than my own judgment; and I seize the first opportunity of pronouncing my sincere recantation. I have heard that some persons conceive me to be under personal obligations to Lord Carlisle; if so, I shall be most particularly happy to learn what they are, and when conferred, that they may be duly appreciated and publicly acknowledged. What I have humbly advanced as an opinion on his printed things, I am prepared to support, if necessary, by quotations from elegies, eulogies, odes, episodes, and

certain facetious and dainty tragedies bearing his name and mark:

> " What can ennoble knaves, or fools, or cowards,
> Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards!"

" So says POPE. Amen!"

No provocation in the world could warrant an outrageous attack of this virulent cast; and though the satirist says, that the works of the noble Earl came before him as fair game for critical review, it is very evident that he only seized upon them for the purpose of gratifying his revenge on account of some private differences. But the inconsistency of this extraordinary genius did not end here; for in his survey of the field of Waterloo, contained in the third Canto of Childe Harold, he takes occasion to notice the death of his cousin, Major Howard, to whose memory he pays a feeling tribute of respect, and then acknowledges, that formerly he had " done his noble father wrong."

This perhaps may be considered as a proof of ingenuousness—be it so: but when this is allowed to

pass for all that it is worth, what must be thought of the texture of that mind which could send into the world a piece tending to wound with an envenomed point the feelings of an aged and exalted friend?

This alternation of sentiment, this change of conduct, from fulsome praise to the grossest calumny, and from the severest injury to the most servile retractation, indicates a disposition governed by passion and not by principle.

An apology for such vacillation cannot be found in any of the ordinary rules by which the intercourse of social life is preserved from the fury of anarchy and the treachery of savage warfare.

But to revert to the volume, the dedication of which has unavoidably occasioned these observations; though the noble author at a subsequent period affected to treat the first fruits of his genius with contempt, these "puerile poems," as he called them, evinced vigorous conception, and correct taste, with a great command of language, and a knowledge of the laws of metrical harmony.

Happier specimens of precocious talent will not indeed be easily found in the history of poetry; and yet one of the first literary journals of the day fell with unaccountable ferocity upon the infant muse, which it attempted to strangle in the cradle. A similar act of barbarity was practised, with more success, against that amiable son of genius and virtue, Henry Kirke White, whose mind certainly suffered seriously from the lacerations inflicted upon it by the fangs of critical malevolence. In the present instance, the malignity of the criticism roused energies far superior to the power which provoked them into retaliation; and the Edinburgh Reviewer, while triumphing in the wanton insolence of assumed authority over a stripling, found himself locked in an Herculean grasp, from whence there was no escape without indelible disgrace.

As an article of curiosity, and showing what little respect is generally due to periodical criticism, where conceited ignorance, clad in a coat of darkness, may with deadly effect aim the poisoned arrow of defamation at solid learning and brilliant genius; the Edinburgh review of Lord Byron's "Hours of Idleness"

is here inserted. It forms indeed an essential part of the literary history of this noble writer; for though talents like his could hardly lie dormant, it may be reasonably doubted whether he would have put them forth so effectively and speedily as he did, had not the northern Zoilus held him up to unmerited ridicule, in the twenty-second volume of the Review for the year 1808.

Nothing can be well conceived more ludicrously pompous than the opening of the criticism which is couched in the technical jargon of legal sophistry; but, to make amends for this solemn foolery, the reviewer takes care to close his judicial sentence in the language of a buffoon.

"The poesy of this young Lord," says he, "belongs to the class which neither Gods nor man are said to permit. Indeed, we do not recollect to have seen a quantity of verse with so few deviations in either direction from that exact standard. His effusions are spread over a dead flat, and can no more get above or below the level, than if they were so much stagnant water. As an extenuation of this offence,

the noble author is peculiarly forward in pleading minority. We have it in the title-page, and on the very back of the volume; it follows his name, like a favourite part of his *style*. Much stress is laid upon it in the preface; and the poems are connected with this general statement of his case, by particular dates, substantiating the age at which each was written. Now, the law upon the point of minority, we hold to be perfectly clear. It is a plea available only to the defendant; no plaintiff can offer it as a supplementary ground of action. Thus, if any suit could be brought against Lord Byron, for the purpose of compelling him to put into court a certain quantity of poetry, and if judgment were given against him, it is highly probable that an exception would be taken, were he to deliver *for poetry* the contents of this volume. To this he might plead *minority;* but as he now makes voluntary tender of the article, he hath no right to sue, on that ground, for the price in good current praise, should the goods be unmarketable. This is our view of the law on the point, and we dare to say, so will it be ruled. Perhaps, however, in reality, all that he tells us about his youth, is rather with a view to increase our wonder, than to soften our censures.

He possibly means to say, 'See how a minor can write! This poem was actually composed by a young man of eighteen, and this by one of only sixteen!'— But, alas, we all remember the poetry of Cowley at ten, and Pope at twelve; and so far from hearing with any degree of surprise, that very poor verses were written by a youth from his leaving school to his leaving college inclusive, we really believe this to be the most common of all occurrences; that it happens in the life of nine men in ten who are educated in England; and that the tenth man writes better verse than Lord Byron.

"His other plea of privilege, our author rather brings forward in order to wave it. He certainly, however, does allude frequently to his family and ancestors; sometimes in poetry, sometimes in notes: and while giving up his claim on the score of rank, he takes care to remember us of Dr. Johnson's saying, that when a nobleman appears as an author, his merit should be handsomely acknowledged. In truth, it is this consideration only, that induces us to give Lord Byron's poems a place in our review, beside our desire to counsel him, that he do forthwith

abandon poetry, and turn his talents, which are considerable, and his opportunities, which are great, to better account.

" With this view, we must beg leave seriously to assure him, that the mere rhyming of the final syllable, even when accompanied by the presence of a certain number of feet, nay, although (which does not always happen) these feet should scan regularly, and have been all counted accurately upon the fingers, is not the whole art of poetry. We would entreat him to believe, that a certain portion of liveliness, somewhat of fancy, is necessary to constitute a poem; and that a poem in the present day, to be read, must contain at least one thought either in a little degree different from the ideas of former writers, or differently expressed. We put it to his candour, whether there is any thing so deserving the name of poetry in verses like the following, written in 1806, and whether, if a youth of eighteen could say any thing so uninteresting to his ancestors, a youth of nineteen should publish it.

" Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu!
Abroad, or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he 'll think upon glory and you.

Though a tear dim his eye, at this sad separation,
'Tis nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emulation,
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

That fame, and that memory, still will he cherish;
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown;
Like you will he live, or like you will he perish—
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own."

"Now we positively do assert, that there is nothing better than these stanzas in the whole compass of the noble minor's volume.

"Lord Byron should also have a care of attempting what the greatest poets have done before him, for comparisons (as he must have had occasion to see at his writing-master's) are odious.—Gray's Ode to Eton College, should really have kept out the ten hobbling stanzas on a distant view of the village and school at Harrow.

"Where fancy, yet, joys to retrace the resemblance,
Of comrades in friendship or mischief allied;
How welcome to me, your ne'er fading remembrance,
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is denied."

" In like manner the exquisite lines of Mr. Rogers, '*On a Tear*,' might have warned the noble author off those premises, and spared us a whole dozen such stanzas as the following :

" Mild charity's glow,
To us mortals below,
Shows the soul from barbarity clear;
Compassion will melt,
Where the virtue is felt,
And its dew is diffus'd in a tear.

The man doom'd to sail,
With the blast of the gale,
Through billows Atlantic to steer,
As he bends o'er the wave,
Which may soon be his grave,
The green sparkles bright with a tear."

" And so of instances in which former poets had failed. Thus, we do not think Lord Byron was made for translating, during his non-age, Adrian's Address to his Soul, when Pope succeeded indifferently in the attempt. If our readers, however, are of another opinion, they may look at it:

"Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay;
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn."

"However, be this as it may, we fear his translations and imitations are great favourites with Lord Byron. We have them of all kinds, from Anacreon to Ossian; and viewing them as school exercises, they may pass. Only, why print them after they have had their day and served their turn? And why call the thing in p. 79, a translation, where *two* words (θελο λεγειν) of the original are expanded into four lines, and the other thing, in p. 81, where μεσονυκτιοις ποθ' ὁραις is rendered by means of six hobbling verses?—As to his Ossianic poesy, we are not very good jugdes; being, in truth, so moderately skilled in that species of composition, that we should, in all probability, be criticizing some bit of the genuine Macpherson itself, were we to express our opinion of Lord Byron's rhapsodies. If, then, the following beginning of a 'Song of Bards,' is by his Lordship, we venture to object to it, as far as

we can comprehend it. 'What form rises on the roar of clouds, whose dark ghost gleams on the red stream of tempests? His voice rolls on the thunder: 'tis Oila the brown Chief of Otihona. He was,' &c. After detaining this 'brown Chief' some time, the bards conclude by giving him their advice to 'raise his fair locks;' then to 'spread them on the arch of the rainbow;' and to 'smile through the tears of the storm.' Of this kind of thing there are no less than *nine* pages; and we can so far venture an opinion in their favour, that they look very like Macpherson; and we are positive they are pretty nearly as stupid and tiresome.

"It is a sort of privilege of poets to be egotists; but they should 'use it as not abusing it;' and particularly one who piques himself (though indeed at the ripe age of nineteen) of being 'an infant bard'—('The artless Helicon I boast is youth)—should either not know, or should seem not to know, so much about his own ancestry. Besides a poem, above cited, on the family seat of the Byrons, we have another of eleven pages on the self-same subject, introduced with an apology, 'he certainly had no inten-

tion of inserting it;' but really, 'the particular request of some friends,' &c. &c. It concludes with five stanzas on himself, 'the last and youngest of the noble line.' There is a good deal also about his maternal ancestors, in a poem on Lachion-y-Gair, a mountain where he spent a part of his youth, and might have learnt, that *pibroch* is not a bagpipe, any more than duet means a fiddle.

"As the author has dedicated so large a part of his volume to immortalize his employments at school and college, we cannot possibly dismiss it without presenting the reader with a specimen of these ingenious effusions. In an ode with a Greek motto, called Granta, we have the following magnificent stanzas:

"There in apartments small and damp,
The candidate for college prizes,
Sits poring by the midnight lamp,
Goes late to bed, yet early rises:
Who reads false quantities in Seale,*
Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle;
Depriv'd of many a wholesome meal,
In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle.

* This alludes to the "Analysis of Greek Metres," by J. B. Seale, D. D. of Christ's College; a standard work on the construction of the

Renouncing every pleasing page
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage,
The square of the hypothenuse.
Still harmless are these occupations,
That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compar'd with other recreations
Which bring together the imprudent."

"We are sorry to hear so bad an account of the College Psalmody, as is contained in the following Attic stanzas:

"Our choir would scarcely be excused,
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

"If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne'er descended,
In furious mood he would have tore 'em."

Greek poetry, and which Lord Byron ought to have studied, and made himself master of before he tried his wit upon it.

" But, whatever judgment may be passed on the poems of this noble minor, it seems we must take them as we find them, and be content; for they are the last we shall ever have from him. He is at best, he says, but an intruder into the groves of Parnassus; he never lived in a garret, like thorough-bred poets; and ' though he once roved a careless mountaineer in the Highlands of Scotland,' he has not of late enjoyed this advantage. Moreover, he expects no profit from his publication; and whether it succeeds or not, ' it is highly improbable, from his situation and pursuits hereafter,' that he should again condescend to become an author. Therefore, let us take what we get, and be thankful. What right have we poor devils to be nice? We are well off to have got so much from a man of this Lord's station, who does not live in a garret, but ' has the sway' of Newstead Abbey. Again, we say, let us be thankful; and, with honest Sancho, bid God bless the giver, nor look the gift horse in the mouth."

Such was the merciless judgment fulminated with more than inquisitorial vengeance, against a volume of poems which, if the reviewer really believed what he predicted, stood no chance of being known; and therefore, all the pains of the learned Theban were spent in the idle labour of breaking a fly upon his critical wheel. It is very evident, however, that this Aristarchus of the New School of Criticism had a much higher opinion of the genius displayed in the "Hours of Idleness," than he feigned to have, and that his contemptuous denunciation of all the poems, without exception, arose from personal enmity to the author. Be this as it may the sweeping censure delivered from the chair of literary despotism, with insufferable dogmatism, recoiled upon the critic with tenfold vengeance; and it was not long before he had the mortification of proclaiming his own disgrace, so far at least as to be obliged to echo the voice of the public, in acknowledging the poetical merits of the very person whom he had doomed to oblivion.

Roused by this unprovoked attack upon his book, and stung by the sarcasms thrown out against his talents, the noble author turned upon his assailant,

the conductor of the Journal, in a poem which, for spirited description, and strength of colouring, may vie with the most pointed of Dryden's satires.

It is, however, to be regretted, that with so much real cause for applying the lash, where no one could say it was undeserved, the noble lord should in the effervescence of his rage, run a-muck, like the intoxicated Indian, against persons from whom he had received no offence. Had he contented himself in his vigorous imitation of the first satire of Juvenal, with exposing the malevolence of the "Scotch Reviewers," he would have acted wisely; nor, indeed, could any thing be said against the administration of a little wholesome correction to those "English Bards," who had contributed in various ways to the corruption of the public taste.

The Edinburgh Reviewers, chief and subalterns, were proper game, for they were become feræ naturæ, and of course had put themselves out of the privilege of legal protection as writers. They had in fact, made war upon the literary world, and consequently were brigands and pirates, who by their outrages, justified

every honest trader, in hanging them up to public odium, as robbers and outlaws. Lord Byron merited therefore, the thanks of the commonwealth of letters, for laying open the practices and holding up the names of the persons of these marauders; who were known to hold their meetings for the selection of victims under the roof of a British Peer. The able and unreserved manner in which the exposure was made, did infinite credit to the spirit and genius of the noble author; but then, on the other hand, he tarnished the fame acquired by this gallant act of chivalry, when, instead of directing his prowess solely against his recreant adversaries, he rambled aside to disturb the peaceful travellers on the king's high-way. By doing this, he unfortunately made himself enemies, and weakened the good effect that would otherwise have resulted from his poignant satire.

But this was not all; for after sharpening the edge of his weapon in a third edition, he as suddenly recalled the next impression, and thus a poem, calculated to produce a salutary revolution in literary criticism, could not be procured. To what cause this capricious resolution is to be ascribed, must be left to con-

jecture; but, whatever, it might be, the reputation of the noble author, was far from being advanced by the suppression. It would, in fact, have been better if he had pocketed the affront put upon him by the northern critics in the first instance, than, after publishing his satire, entitled "English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers," to recall the piece; thus, in effect, retracting both what he had advanced, and succumbing to the very opponents over whom he had gained a triumph. The noble lord should have erased what he had written and printed of an offensive nature against public institutions, and private individuals, from whom he had received no injury; and in doing this the power of his satire upon the proper objects of it would have been increased.

In a subsequent publication, his lordship took occasion to correct an historical error into which the Scotch critic had fallen; and having done this, he thought proper to add the following note: "I have endeavoured to wave the personal feelings which rise in despite of me, in touching upon any part of the Edinburgh Review; not from a wish to conciliate the favour of its writers, or to cancel the remembrance

of a syllable, I have formerly published, from a sense of the impropriety of mixing up private resentments, with a disquisition of the present kind, and more particularlarly at this distance of time and but simply place."

Now this note is at variance with his conduct in suppressing the satire, for by that very act, he did endeavour to " cancel the remembrance of what he had formerly published ;" and so far it seems evident, that his object must have been to " conciliate the favour of the Reviewers."

But this was not the only inconsistency of which the noble lord was guilty, in his just quarrel with the Edinburgh Critics; for he followed up his satire by another poem, bearing the title of " Hints to Horace," which, after printing one or two copies he destroyed, because he now felt, or was persuaded that it would be for his interest as an author, to lay down his lance, and make friends of those, against whom he had declared eternal war, "as a Hydra, to crush one head of which he had deemed it so much an act of duty, that he was contented to lose a hand in the encounter."

CHAPTER V.

Anecdote of the Duke of Wharton.—Similar one of Lord Byron.—Monument to his dog.—Inscription on a skull made into a cup.—Amourous connexions.—Anecdote of false sensibility.—Lord Byron made the subject of a novel.

IT is related of Philip, the profligate Duke of Wharton, that in his travels he purchased a bear's cub of which he became so extremely fond as to make it his constant attendant both night and day, to the great annoyance of his tutor. On reaching Geneva, this extraordinary man, suddenly departed for Lyons, leaving young Bruin behind him with the following letter to the poor governor; " Being no longer able to bear with your ill-usage, I have thought proper to be gone from you; however, that you may not want

company, I have left you the bear, as the most suitable companion in the world that could be picked up for you."

Whether Lord Byron had read the history of this eccentric nobleman, who was a wit and a poet, the writer of the present sketch has not the means of determining; but it is somewhat remarkable, that while a student at Cambridge, he should have indulged himself in a similar humour, by making a young bear the associate of his studies; and what is no less singular, on quitting the university, his lordship left the animal in possession of his chambers, to stand, as he expressed it, candidate for the next vacant fellowship. Whimsical as this coincidence is, it appears to be more than accidental, especially as in both instances the choice of the favourites resulted rather from a wish to give offence to others than to gratify any particular attachment. It would betray a narrow spirit to scrutinize with severity the propensities and amusements of youth; but when those inclinations and sports have a peculiarity in them different from juvenile pursuits in general, they are no longer matters of trifling interest, but become circumstances of import in the

illustration of character. He who, under the regimen of academic discipline, manifests an impatience of restraint, and a contempt of the laws of decorum, gives plain indications of what may be expected from him when he shall have attained the entire command of his own actions.

The eventful and melancholy story of the Duke of Wharton may be mentioned in confirmation of the truth of this observation. Possessed of talents which only required a proper direction to have proved beneficial to the world, this extraordinary man, by becoming his own master, while yet a minor, had such opportunities of following the impulse of his passions, that his mind, for want of government, at length took delight in nothing but extravagance. Though he married for love, he soon abandoned his wife, and went abroad, where he not only dissipated his patrimony, upon low connexions, but changed his religion, if indeed he ever had any, and at the age of thirty-two closed his mortal, but short career, in a Spanish convent, whither he had been removed out of charity.

Such was the end of a noble genius who might have

shone one of the brightest ornaments of the British peerage, if he had been guided by principle and had laid the reins upon his imagination.

But to return to the immediate object of these memoirs. On leaving college, and getting rid of his shaggy chum, the noble lord adopted another favourite of the four-footed kind but of a different species. This was a large Newfoundland dog, in the instruction of which he took as much delight, as Sir Ashton Lever formerly did in the education of horses. Among the early amusements of his lordship, were swimming and managing a boat, in both of which exercises he acquired great dexterity, even in his childhood. In his aquatic exercises near Newstead Abbey, he had seldom any other companion than his dog to try whose sagacity and fidelity he would sometimes fall out of the boat, as if by accident, upon which the animal never failed to jump overboard and seizing his master, would drag him instantly to the shore. There was, however, a very prudential reason for this artifice, since the dog being practised in the performance of a necessary piece of service; might on some occasion or other prove of great benefit in saving human life.

On losing this faithful creature in the autumn of 1808, his lordship caused a monument to be erected commemorative of its attachment: and bearing an inscription which is so little to the credit of the author, that four lines only, and those not the worst in the piece, must here suffice as a precious evidence of early misanthropy:

> "Ye, who perchance behold this simple urn,
> Pass on—it honours none you wish to mourn:
> To mark a friend's remains these stones arise,
> I never knew but one and here he lies."

Now this panegyric upon a dog, the whole of whose virtue lay in mechanical instinct, when the writer had a parent living, with many other relatives and acquaintance, the sincerity of whose friendship he had no right to call in question, can be considered as nothing better than an intended violation of good manners, and a direct insult upon moral feeling. That this young nobleman acted well in placing a grateful token of remembrance over the remains of an affectionate animal, cannot be denied; but in doing this, he should have been careful to keep his praises within the bounds of decent propriety, and not have

made the good qualities of a dog, whatever they might be, the vehicle for pouring out the most cynical language of abuse upon the whole body of mankind.

It was remarked of Sterne, who had much philanthropy in his writings and none in his heart, that a dead ass was a dearer object to him than a dying mother. Thus also in the present instance; while the noble lord was erecting a mausoleum to his dog, in the park of Newstead, he had so little respect for decorum, as to rake into the cemetery of his ancestors, for a skull sufficiently capacious and in a proper state to be converted into a carousing cup. Having found one to his liking, without troubling himself whether it had belonged to man or woman, to his grandfather or grandmother, he had it mounted upon a silver stand, with an inscription engraven round it, which for spirit might rival the Bacchanalian productions of the Teian bard; but which, for delicacy of sentiment, could only become the Scandinavian barbarians, who deemed it the highest point of felicity that they should in the future state be seated in the hall of Odin, and there get intoxicated by quaffing strong liquors from the skulls of those over whom they had triumphed in battle.

But, as Sir Thomas Browne observes, "to be knaved out of our graves, to have our skulls made drinking-bowls, and our bones turned into pipes to delight and sport our enemies, are tragical abominations."

What, however, would that energetic writer have said of a youth possessing ample means, and a lively genius, polished by education, who could so far forget the natural awe and sensibility produced by the sight of the last reliques of mortality, as to make a wassailing cup of the head of one of his progenitors, whose virtue perhaps, in a former age, had been a blessing and an example to that mansion and the neighbourhood?

Anchorets have been accustomed to take a skull for their companion and monitor, to remind them of the vanity of life, and to prepare their thoughts for death, by learning from it the salutary lesson of a constant subjugation of the passions. But it is to be hoped, for the honour of humanity, that there are few or none so lost to the impression of that truth as to look upon a skull, and read these lines written beneath it, without a chill of horror and disgust:

" Quaff while thou canst—another race,
When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead."

Now whatever may be thought of the "rhyme," there surely cannot be two opinions among rational men, concerning that " revelry," which is promoted by the emblems of mortality.

After this mockery of

——— the great Counsellor who man inspires
With every nobler thought and fairer deed,

one ceases to wonder at the melancholy whinings occasioned by repeated disappointments in love, or at the frequent allusion to early riot and intemperance which abound in the juvenile productions of the noble author; for of what value could that passion be, which had nothing but external form and sensual gratification for its excitement, and which, when crossed, sought oblivion in a goblet, fetched from the charnel house?

As the love that inspires poets with beautiful

imagery, and tender sentiments, frequently becomes ridiculous, when traced to its origin, so it will be often found scandalously immoral in its effects.

It is doubtful whether the Laura of Petrarch had ever any real existence: but the Chloe of Prior is certainly known to have been a vulgar drab, and a common prostitute.

All the publications of Lord Byron, exhibit proofs that the fire of his passions burst forth with the flame of his genius; and that, while yet in his boyhood, he had more mistresses than muses. It is curious to observe, how pathetecally he complains in his verses, of the inconstancy of one, the marriage of another, the death of a third, and the "light fame" of a fourth;—but though every loss, according to his own account, blighted his happiness, and made the world a blank: he "is not always," as Johnson says of Waller "at the last gasp; he does not die of a frown nor live, upon a smile. There is, however, too much love and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the empire of beauty is represented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed

by the multiplicity of human passions, and the variety of human wants."

Had the amatory productions of the noble author been confined to his first publications, there would have been little occasion for these remarks; but in almost every one of his subsequent volumes, he brings before the reader some of those effusions of his pen, of which, upon sober reflection, he ought to have felt ashamed.

What idea can be entertained in favour of the moral constitution of that mind, which in one moment is disconsolate at having been deprived by death of a loving and beloved maiden; and in the next, is breathing out the most tender sentiments to a married woman! Is it possible that the love could be pure, which had so many objects; or that the grief could be sincere, which was so soon converted into ardent devotion for a new idol?

The pride of him who seeks fame by his conquests over the female heart, is of the most contemptible description; and yet, what else but this could induce

any man to publish, though under enigmatic signatures, the variety of his amorous connexions? Though the writing of love elegies, and stanzas "on a mistress's eyebrows," may not be altogether affectation; the printing of such performances certainly savours more of vanity than feeling, since it manifests as strong a wish to gain credit for fine verses as for tender sentiments.

It is related of one of our poets, that he made every incident of his life the subject of an ode or a sonnet. On hearing that his only son lay ill, and that his life was despaired of, he exclaimed very affectionately,—"Oh, I will sit down and write an elegy upon him."—"Had you not better," said his friend, "order your carriage immediately, and console him by your presence?"

This story will apply pertinently enough to illustrate the true quality of that esteem which is expressed in metaphors, and clothed in numbers; which pretends raptures that are not felt, and describes beauties that are not seen.

Such, there is every reason to believe, was the real nature of that passion, which burns so ardently in the amatory lines of Lord Byron, but in which there is too much richness of phrase, to comport with true sensibility.

One female of elevated rank, who was said to have been in the number of those to whom the poet professed more than common attachment, took ample revenge on him for his inconstancy and freedom, by drawing his character as the hero of a novel, which for a time, arrested the public curiosity in no ordinary degree. In that performance his lordship's supposed intrigues and infidelity were laid open with unsparing severity; and, with the exception of Zeluco, and the personages that figure most conspicuously in the noble lord's principal poems, it will not be easy to meet with any thing more repulsive either in works of fiction, or in the world of reality, than what has been exhibited in caricature by the author of Glenarvon.

CHAPTER VI.

Voyage to Lisbon. — Assassination. — Travels in Spain.—Patriotic War.—Voyage to Greece.—Albania. — Ali Pacha. — Anecdotes. — Highlanders. — Athens. — Spoliations.— Poem of Minerva.—Tweddell.—Literary Pursuits.—Emancipation of the Greeks.—Adventure in the Hellespont.—Return to England.

ON arriving at the age of manhood, Lord Byron took a long leave of his native country, with the view of making a tour in foreign lands; but as the ordinary course of travelling through Europe was then impeded, by the war which prevailed between England and France, he embarked at Falmouth, for Lisbon, intending to proceed from thence across the Peninsula to the Mediterranean. The companion of his voyage was Mr. Hobhouse, in conjunction with whom he had just before published a small volume of poems and

translations; which attracted so little notice, that almost the whole impression was converted into waste paper. Though Portugal was at this time occupied by the British forces, who were engaged in the defence of the country against the French, such was the frequency of assassination in the streets of Lisbon and its vicinity, that the people paid no more respect to their protectors than to their own countrymen. Englishmen were daily butchered; and so far from redress being obtained, not the slightest notice was taken of these murders; and it was even dangerous to interfere on such occasions.

"I was once stopped," says Lord Byron, "on the way to the theatre at eight o'clock in the evening, when the streets were not more empty than they generally are at that hour, opposite to an open shop, and in a carriage with a friend. Had we not fortunately been armed, I have not the least doubt that we should have adorned a tale instead of telling one."

A state of society so disorganized as this could not but excite indignant feelings in a sensible mind, especially when the moral disorder was contrasted with

the wonders and beauties which nature had wasted on such men.

Yet there was nothing new or strange in all this; for the present writer remembers to have witnessed similar acts of atrocity in that very city, many years before the visit of Lord Byron. Walking one morning in the neighbourhood of Belem, he saw a Portuguese barber issue furiously out of his shop, and, without the least provocation in the world, plunge a stiletto into the side of an English sailor who happened to be passing quietly along. Having perpetrated this murderous deed, the assassin ran with all haste till he reached the church, where he fell prostrate before the altar, crossed himself with great appearance of devotion, and, being in that sanctuary, escaped punishment. An enquiry was indeed made into the affair, but without answering any other end than that of ascertaining the motive of the misguided wretch, who fancied it a meritorious act to destroy an heretic.

Where then religion is considered as a justifiable plea for shedding human blood, it ought not to raise wonder that the stimulants of revenge and rapacious-

ness should operate to the commission of homicide. That an offence so heinous should cease to be regarded as a crime, can only be accounted for by the total deficiency of moral principle, and the facility of obtaining absolution for every thing short of sacrilege and heresy, which, in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, are sins infinitely greater than the violation of all the ten commandments.

"Pray," said a priest to one of his parishioners, who in his confession, particularly enumerated offences of such little moment as eating flesh on fast-days,—"pray friend, have you never been guilty of robbing a traveller, now and then?"—"Oh yes, father; to be sure, I have," answered the peasant with great frankness. "Well, and I suppose, that upon a time you and your fellows have not scrupled to murder some of those unfortunate passengers who have chanced to fall in your way."—"No," says the robber, "not exactly murdered them, your reverence; we only put them to death, when they made a show of resistance; and then it was a matter of course."

Our noble traveller, therefore, might have easily

traced the cause of the indifference with which assassination is treated in Portugal, to something else than the degeneracy of the people of that country; since he must have known that the crime is not peculiar to that nation, but prevails, more or less, wherever the form of sacerdotal absolution is regarded as equivalent to a complete remission of sins.

During his short residence at Lisbon, Lord Byron made excursions to Coimbra, the university of Portugal; to Mafra, the palace where the late Queen resided after the loss of her reason; and to the romantic seat built in a secluded spot on the side of a mountain by our countryman Beckford, but which was then abandoned by the owner, whose history in many respects bears a melancholy resemblance to that of the noble poet.

Having just seen enough of the Portuguese capital to admire the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and to conceive an utter dislike to the nation, our traveller pursued his course across the mountainous ridge that divides the province of Alentejo, and then, descending

to the banks of the dark Guadiana at Beia, entered the plains of Andalusia. The period was extremely critical, for upon the fate of Spain, hung suspended that of Europe: but though a general anxiety prevailed among all those who were panting for the peace of the world; and who knew that this desirable object was a consummation not to be expected, so long as the Colossus of France remained unsubdued; such was the apathy of the noble lord, an apathy acquired in the school of politics to which he had attached himself, that he looked with splenetic unconcern upon the tremendous struggle, and beheld the agitated state of the country where he now stood, with the same feelings that he would have contemplated the war of the ant-hill.

The very circumstance of a nation being forced to contend for its political existence with a gigantic power, by whom it had been drawn into an alliance under the pledge of protection, was of a nature to rouse the most phlegmatic spirit into resentment against the oppressor.

Yet nothing of this natural sense of justice, or this

sympathy with the injured, appears to have been felt by Lord Byron when, on passing the gentle river that divided Portugal from Spain, he heard that warlike sound which threatened the annihilation of a kingdom, and the subjection of the people to a foreign and hated yoke. Instead of being warmed, with the usual ardour of youthful heroism in such a cause, and looking upon the men with admiration, who were thus generously resolved to save their country or to perish with its independence, Lord Byron ventured to ridicule the Spanish Patriots as fools, and to pronounce a decisive judgment against the mighty undertaking in which they were gloriously embarked.

It is much to be regretted, that a mind so feelingly alive to the harmony of nature in other respects, and so susceptible of the most powerful impressions from the wonders of the material creation, should have been out of tune only when brought into association with the rest of the species. Yet thus early did the disposition to expel the whole moral world from the communion of charitable sentiment develope itself in this noble person, who saw nothing wrong in the universe, except mankind.

From Seville, which, according to the representation given of the place by its noble visitant, was at this period sunk in lewdness, his lordship proceeded to Cadiz, where he remained some time, and then embarked with his friend Hobhouse in an English frigate for the Mediterranean.

Our travellers explored Albania before they visited any other part of the Ottoman dominions, and having reached Joannina, the capital of Ali Pacha's territory, were presented to that chief by Major now Colonel Leake, the English resident. Ali received them with the greatest respect, and gave them an invitation to Tepaleni, his birth-place, and favourite seat, which though only one day's distance from Berent, where he then was, the journey took up nine in the accomplishment, on account of the rains. In this excursion, Lord Byron and his companion were overtaken by a violent thunderstorm, during which the guides lost their way, so that it was with great difficulty and no little peril that they regained the right road in this mountainous country. The resemblance between the inhabitants of this region, and the Highlanders of Scotland, in dress, figure, and manner of living, struck his lordship very

forcibly. The very mountains of Albania seemed to him Caledonian, but only with a kinder climate. The kilt, though white; the spare active form; the dialect, Celtic in its sound; and the hardy habits of the Albanians, all carried the mind of the noble traveller back to the days of his childhood, and the hills of Morven. "No nation," says he, "are so detested by their neighbours, as these mountaineers are by all the tribes in the vicinity. The Greeks hardly regard them as Christians, or the Turks as Moslems; and in fact, they are a mixture of both, and sometimes neither. Their habits are predatory: all are armed; and the red-shawled Arnaouts, the Montenegrins, Chimariots and Gaydes, are treacherous; the others differ somewhat in garb, and essentially in character. As far as my own experience goes," continues the noble lord, "I can speak favourably. I was attended by two, an Infidel and a Mussulman, to Constantinople, and every other part of Turkey which came within my observation; and men more faithful in peril, or indefatigable in service, are rarely to be found. The Infidel was named Basilius, the Moslem Dervish Tahiri: the former a man of middle age, and the latter about my own. Basilius was strictly charged

by Ali Pacha in person to attend us; and Dervish was one of fifty who accompanied us through the forests of Acarnania to the banks of the Achelous, and onward to Messalunghi in Ætolia. There I took him into my own service, and never had occasion to repent till the moment of my departure."

Of the attachment of these mountaineers his lordship gives the following remarkable instances:

"When in 1810, after the departure of my friend Mr. Hobhouse for England, I was seized with a severe fever in the Morea, these men saved my life, by frightening away my physician, whose throat they threatened to cut, if I was not cured within a given time. To this consolatory assurance of posthumous retribution, and a resolute refusal of Dr. Romanelli's prescriptions, I attribute my recovery. I had left my last remaining English servant at Athens; my dragoman, or interpreter, was as ill as myself; and my poor Arnaouts nursed me with an attention which would have done honour to civilization.

"When preparations were made for my return, my

Albanians were summoned to receive their pay. Basilius took his with an awkward show of regret at my intended departure, and marched away to his quarters with his bag of piastres. I sent for Dervish, but for some time he was not to be found; at last he entered, just as Signor Logotheti, father to the Anglo-consul at Athens, and some other of my Greek acquaintances, paid me a visit. Dervish took the money, but on a sudden dashed it to the ground, and clasping his hands, which he raised to his forehead, rushed out of the room weeping bitterly. From that moment to the hour of my embarkation, he continued his lamentations, and all our efforts to console him only produced this answer, "He leaves me!"—Signor Logotheti, who never wept before for any thing less than the loss of a para, (about the fourth of a farthing,) the Padre of the convent, my attendants, and my visitors, melted; and I verily believe that even Sterne's foolish fat scullion would have left her fish-kettle to sympathize with the unaffected and unexpected sorrow of this barbarian. For my own part, when I remembered that, a short time before my departure from England, a noble and most intimate associate had excused himself from taking leave of me,

'because he had to attend a relation to a milliner's'—I felt no less surprised than humiliated by the present occurrence and the past recollection."

One or two more anecdotes related of this child of nature are both interesting and characteristic. "That Dervish," says his lordship, "would leave me with some regret was to be expected; for when master and man have been scrambling over the mountains of a dozen provinces together, they are unwilling to separate; but his present feelings, contrasted with his native ferocity, improved my opinion of the human heart. I believe this almost feudal fidelity is frequent among them. One day, on our journey over Parnassus, an Englishman in my service gave him a push, in some dispute about the baggage, which he unluckily mistook for a blow; he spoke not, but sat down, leaning his head upon his hands. Foreseeing the consequences, we endeavoured to explain away the affront, which only produced the following answer:—'I have been a robber;—I am a soldier;—no captain ever struck me;—You are my master;—I have eaten your bread;—but by that bread (a usual oath) had it been otherwise, I would have stabbed the dog your servant, and gone

to the mountains.' So the affair ended; but from that day forward he never thoroughly forgave the thoughtless fellow by whom he had been insulted.

"On my third journey to Cape Colonna, as we passed through the defile that leads from the hamlet between Keratia and Colonna, I observed Dervish riding rather out of the path, and leaning his head upon his hand as if in pain. I rode up to him and enquired. 'We are in peril,' he answered.—'What peril? We are not now in Albania, nor in the passes to Ephesus, Messalunghi, or Lepanto; there are plenty of us, well armed, and the Choriates have not courage to be thieves.'—'True, Affendi, (that is, Lord,) but nevertheless the shot is ringing in my ears.' —'The shot! not one has been fired this morning.' —'I hear it notwithstanding—bom, bom, as plainly as I hear your voice.'—'Pshaw!'—'As you please, Affendi; if it is written, so will it be.' I left this quick-eared predestinarian, and rode up to Basili, his Christian compatriot, whose ears, though not at all prophetic, by no means relished the intelligence. We all arrived at Colonna, remained some hours, and returned leisurely, saying a variety of brilliant things in

more languages than spoiled the building of Babel, upon the mistaken seer. While we were contemplating the beautiful prospect, Dervish was occupied about the columns. I thought he was deranged into an antiquarian, and asked him if he had become a Palaocastro man?—'No,' said he, 'but these pillars will be useful in making a stand;' and added other remarks which at least evinced his own belief in his troublsome faculty of 'forehearing.' On our return to Athens, we heard from Leoné, (a prisoner set on shore some days after,) of an intended attack from a party of Mainotes concealed in the caverns beneath, and that they were only deterred from attacking us by the appearance of my two Albanians, conjecturing very sagaciously, but falsely, that we had a complete guard of Arnaouts at hand. I was at some pains to question the man, and he described the dresses, arms, and marks of the horses of our party so accurately, that, with other circumstances, we could not doubt of his having been in villanous company, and ourselves in a bad neighbourhood."

When Lord Byron noticed the striking affinity between his Albanian friends, in language, person, and

manners, and the mountaineers of North Britain, it is wonderful that he should have passed over the faculty possessed by Dervish, which bears so strong a resemblance to the gift of prescience said to be still existing among the Highlanders. The similarity in this respect is full as observable as in others; and yet there is nothing in either, but what may very well be accounted for upon common principles. The inhabitants of lofty regions are universally of a spare and active constitution, for they are from infancy accustomed to constant exercise; which of course requires a dress adapted to agility, and not liable to incommode the wearers. In regard to quickness of perception also, the dwellers on lofty eminences, have a manifest advantage over those who reside on plains, in towns, and in valleys; since the very situations which the mountaineers occupy, and the pursuits in which they are almost constantly engaged, compel them to a perpetual exertion of the organs of hearing and sight. To the same cause may be ascribed the sharp, sonorous, and guttural sounds which distinguish the native tongues of Highlanders, from the more liquid and modulated languages of social life in closely connected communities.

So likewise, without any disparagement of Lord Byron's judgment, or detracting from the merit of his Albanian servant, we see nothing extraordinary in the sensibility of Dervish on parting with his master. No doubt the expression was creditable to both, since it was a proof of gratitude felt, for kindness uniformly bestowed; but where such a liberal patron had never been known, and where one of like courtesy was not likely again to be found, it was natural that the loser should be affected by the separation.

When Lord Byron and his company visited Athens, they were greatly mortified and thoroughly indignant to see the place dismantled of many of the beauties which had rendered the spot, even in its dilapidated state, sacred in the estimation of all travellers who possessed any reverence for the genius of antiquity. But the ravages of time, and those committed by barbarians, bore no comparison to the extent of the spoliation recently perpetrated in the name, and by the orders of an English Ambassador at the Porte; who had exerted his influence so effectually as almost to demolish several of the finest of the temples that were then remaining. After this is

was too much in the spirit of Erostratus for the same nobleman to cause his own name, together with that of his wife, to be inscribed on a pillar of the temple of Minerva. This extraordinary mark of vanity, however, was actually executed in a very conspicuous manner, and deeply engraved in the marble, at a considerable elevation. Lord Byron, on beholding the inscription, was so much hurt, and conceived such a just abhorrence of this presumption, which he considered as almost amounting to sacrilege, that with great labour and difficulty he got himself raised up to the requisite height, and obliterated the name of the earl, but gallantly left that of the lady untouched. Besides this act of zeal, he adopted another, and severer method of humbling the pride of his brother peer; for, on the west side of the same temple, he caused the following monkish lines to be very deeply cut, in large characters:

"Quod non fecerunt Goti,
Hoc fecerunt Scoti."

But the resentment of our young lord was not limited to mere localities. He invoked his powerful

muse on the occasion, and, as if he had been actually inspired by the Genius of the place, he wrote a poem, the opening part of which constitutes the introduction to the second Canto of Childe Harold, but the remainder was suppressed as being too caustic for publication. In this performance, composed amid the ruins of the temple of Minerva, the goddess is represented as addressing herself to the noble bard, and calling upon him to "survey her vacant violated fane," despoiled by Alaric and the modern Goth. Pallas then proceeds:

"Arms gave the first his right, the last had none,
But basely stole what less barbarians won:
So when the lion quits the fell repast,
Next prowls the wolf, the filthy jackall last:
Flesh, limbs, and blood, the former make their own,
The last base brute securely gnaws the bone.
Yet still the gods are just, and crimes are crost,
See here what ***** won, and what he lost.
Another name with his pollutes my shrine:
Behold where DIAN'S beams disdain to shine.
Some retribution still might PALLAS claim,
When VENUS half aveng'd MINERVA'S shame."

In allusion to the country of the spoliator, the goddess is made to express her vindictive feelings in these vigorous lines:

"And thus accursed be the day and year
She sent a Pict to play the felon here.
Yet Caledonia claims some native worth,
And dull Bœotia gave a PINDAR birth.
So may her few, the letter'd and the brave,
Bound to no clime, and victors o'er the grave,
Shake off the mossy slime of such a land,
And shine like children of a happier strand.
Mortal, (the blue-ey'd maid resumed once more)
Bear back my mandate to thy native shore:
Though fallen, alas! this vengeance yet is mine,
To turn my counsels far from lands like thine.
Hear, then, in silence, PALLAS' stern behest;
Hear and believe, for time will tell the rest:
First, on the head of him who did the deed,
My curse shall light, on him and all his seed.
Without one spark of intellectual fire,
Be all his sons as senseless as their sire;
If one with wit the parent-breed disgrace,
Believe him bastard of a better race;
Still with his hireling artists let him prate,
And Folly's praise repay for Wisdom's hate.

Long of their patron's gusto let them tell,
Whose noblest native gusto is to sell:
To sell, and make (may shame record the day)
The State, receiver of his pilfer'd prey."

These extracts are sufficient to show the spirit in which the whole piece was written, and the necessity of withholding it from publication. But the author condensed and pointed the virus of it in one stanza of the poetic narrative of his travels, as follows:

" But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared;
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren, and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons, too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,
And never knew till then the weight of despot's chains."

In a note on this passage, the author relates these curious particulars of the final ruin of Athens, by British agency:

" An Italian painter of the first eminence, named Lusieri, is the agent of devastation; and like the Greek *finder* of Verres in Sicily, who followed the same profession, he has proved the able instrument of plunder. Between this artist, and the French Consul, Fauvel, who wishes to rescue the remains for his own government, there is now a violent dispute concerning a car employed in their conveyance, the wheel of which (I wish they were both broken upon it,) has been locked up by the Consul; and Lusieri has laid his complaint before the Waywode. Lord Elgin has been extremely happy in his choice of Signor Lusieri. During a residence of ten years at Athens, he never had the curiosity to proceed as far as Sunium, till he accompanied us in our second excursion. However, his works, as far as they go, are most beautiful; but they are almost all unfinished. While he and his patrons confine themselves to tasting metals, appreciating cameos, sketching columns, and cheapening gems, their little absurdities are as harmless as insect or fox-hunting, maiden-speechifying, barouche driving, or any such pastime; but when they carry away three or four ship-loads of the most valuable and massy relics, that time and barbarism have left to the

most injured and most celebrated of cities; when they destroy, in a vain attempt to tear down, those works, which have been the admiration of ages, I know no motive which can excuse, no name which can designate, the perpetrators of this most dastardly devastation. It was not the least of the crimes laid to the charge of Verres, that he had plundered Sicily, in the manner since imitated at Athens. The most unblushing impudence could hardly go further than to affix the name of its plunderer to the walls of the Acropolis; while the wanton and useless defacement of the whole range of the basso-relievos, in one compartment of the temple, will never permit that name to be pronounced by an observer without execration. On this occasion I speak impartially: I am not a collector, or admirer of collections, consequently no rival; but I have some early prepossession in favour of Greece, and do not think the honour of England advanced by plunder, whether of India or Attica.

"Another noble lord has done *better*, because he has done less; but some others, more or less noble, yet "all honourable men," have done *best*, because,

after a deal of excavation, and execration, they have done nothing at all. We had such ink shed, and wine shed, which almost ended in blood-shed !—Lord E's prig quarrelled with another, Gropius by name, (and a very good name too for his business,) and muttered something about satisfaction, in a verbal answer to a note of the poor Prussain : this was stated at table to Gropius, who laughed, but could eat no dinner afterwards. The rivals were not reconciled when I left Greece. I have reason to remember their squabble, for they wanted to make me their arbitrator."

The national purchase of the Athenian marbles, and the transfer of them to the British Museum, can hardly be considered as justifying the manner in which those treasures were obtained; though when they were obtained, it was perhaps prudent to secure them from going out of the kingdom. There can be no doubt in regard to the motive of the person who first got them into his possession; and, therefore, all the cant about the love of the arts, and of the patriotic wish to enrich England, by those relics of ancient genius which France coveted so much, will be con-

sidered as so much dust raised to cover what nothing could excuse. It is true Fauvel was employed in Greece, in collecting curious remains for the National Institute; but let us hear what he says himself on the subject, three years before the arrival of Lord Byron. In a letter to M. Monge, he thus observes and complains: "General Sebastiani, to whom I am recommended with respect to the arts and antiquities, has not yet honoured me with an answer. I have requested him to procure me liberty to make researches wherever I please, without being liable to interruption from the preponderance of the English, owing, it must however be confessed, to their money. As I am not provided with the same weapons, I am obliged to have recourse to our ambassador, who is an amateur and connoisseur in antiquities. In your kind letter, you offer me your services for the preservation and publication of my discoveries, for which I thank you; but the war prevents me from sending any thing. On the conclusion of peace, I shall claim your promise, and avail myself of your offer to place in security whatever I may think myself liable to be robbed of, as long as the temple of Janus shall remain open."

Again he says in another letter to the same associate of the Institute: "Without information, and always uncertain with regard to our fate, I retire to rest in the midst of my works, my antiquities, and my medals, ignorant whether to-morrow I may call myself their owner. Judge therefore, my friend, whether this situation is suited to the artist and the amateur. It is indeed so precarious that I think nothing safe, but what I commit to paper."

Now it is evident from this, that while the English minister made use of his influence to get the most precious remains of ancient art into his possession, the French ambassador took no concern at all in the matter; but left poor Fauvel to contend, as well as he could, with the superior power of his rival. After this, and it deserves notice that the fact is admitted in Lord Elgin's own publication, it becomes a material question whether his lordship attained the marbles of Athens in his public or private capacity. If, as there is every reason to believe, that it was in the former alone, and that otherwise he could not have succeeded; then the national repository ought to have received them as a matter of right; but if in the latter,

then the representative of the British monarch acted the part of a trafficker, when he ought to have been differently employed.

In an official publication entitled, "a Memorandum on the subject of the Earl of Elgin's Pursuits in Greece," great stress is laid upon the vast importance of the treasures which he procured at Athens, and the perilous state from which they were rescued by his exertions. Now as it is allowed that these remains of ancient sculpture had continued undisturbed during many ages, it is hardly to be supposed that they were in danger of being destroyed at the enlightened period when our minister took such pains to get them into his hands. What the barbarians of the middle ages had spared, the Greeks and the Turks of the present generation were not the parties to remove or destroy; for the best of all reasons, the desire of gain, which they both well knew was promoted by the preservation of these valuable objects. As to the Athenians themselves, who were the most interested in taking care of the relics of their ancient glory; though they might not perhaps be enthusiasts in the cause of science, they could neither be devoid of the feeling of national

pride, nor yet insensible of the advantages resulting from the visits of foreigners to survey the ruins of their city and neighbourhood.

We are assured by Lord Byron, who from his long residence there at the time must have been well acquainted with the sentiments of the Greeks, that there was but one opinion among them upon the spoliation, which they were compelled to witness, and could only lament.

"We can all feel or imagine," says his lordship, "the regret with which the ruins of cities, once the capitals of empires, are beheld; the reflections suggested by such events are too trite to require recapitulation. But never did the littleness of man and the vanity of his very best virtues, of patriotism to exalt, and of valour to defend his country, appear more conspicuous than in the record of what Athens was, and the certainty of what she now is. This theatre of contention between mighty factions, of the struggles of orators, the exaltation and deposition of tyrants, the triumph and punishment of generals, is now become a scene of petty intrigue and perpetual disturb-

ance, between the bickering agents of certain British nobility and gentry. The wild foxes, the owls, and serpents in the ruins of Babylon, were surely less degrading than such inhabitants. The Turks have the plea of conquest for their tyranny, and the Greeks have only suffered the fortune of war, incidental to the bravest; but how are the mighty fallen, when two painters contest the privilege of plundering the Parthenon, and triumph in turn, according to the tenour of each succeeding firmaun! Sylla could but punish, Philip subdue, and Xerxes burn Athens; but it remained for the paltry antiquarian, and his despicable agents, to render her contemptible as himself and his pursuits. The Parthenon, before its destruction in part by fire, during the Venetian siege, had been a temple, a church, and a mosque. In each point of view, it is an object of regard; for though it changed its worshippers, it was still a place of worship; being therefore thrice sacred to devotion, its violation is a triple sacrilege."

During the residence of Lord Byron at Athens, he joined with one or two more Englishmen in paying a tribute of respect to the remains of the learned John

Tweddell, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who died in that city, while on his travels, in the summer of 1799. No stone or inscription had marked the spot in the Theseum where the bones of this accomplished scholar lay, till the noble lord and Mr. John Fiott, of St. John's College, succeeded though not without some opposition, in placing on the grave a large block of marble, with a beautiful Greek epitaph thereon, written by Mr. Walpole.

Amidst his excursions and amusements, the noble lord devoted much of his time to the attainment of the Romaic or modern language of Greece, and also of the Turkish, which is infinitely more difficult. Of the former he became complete master; and the notes to his principal poems evince the diligence of his application, and the extent of his acquirements in philological erudition. But, perhaps, the happiest proofs of his facility in making himself thoroughly acquainted with the structure and idioms of modern tongues, are to be found in his translations.

It is no hard matter, with the help of dictionaries and grammars, especially when a good instructor can

also be procured, to gain a competent knowledge of any living speech; but it requires genius of a very superior description to seize the poetic spirit of one language, and to diffuse it without evaporation into another. This, however, has been accomplished most effectually by Lord Byron, in his versions of French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Greek poems; and that which enhances the merit of these performances, is the difficulty of expressing the manner, as well as the very thought of the original, when both have a peculiarity arising from local customs, sentiments, and phraseology.

It is, therefore, evident that the time of this young nobleman was not idly spent, or thrown away upon trifling objects, while on his travels; and though he has withheld from the public, the journal of his progress, those who have been favoured with a sight of it can bear testimony to the elegance of the descriptive part, and the judgment displayed in the reflections.

Some idea indeed of the value of the narrative, may be formed from the detached notes which the author has himself selected out of the mass, as illus-

trative of his poems. In one of these, he has given a brief but admirable sketch of the ruins of Minerva's temple, situated on the promontory of Sunium, now called Cabo Colonna, or the Cape of the Columns, from the pillars which adorn its brow.

"In all Attica," says Lord Byron, "if we except Athens itself and Marathon, there is no scene more interesting than Cape Colonna. To the antiquary and artist, sixteen columns are an inexhaustible source of observation and design; to the philosopher, the supposed scene of Plato's conversations, will not be unwelcome; and the traveller will be struck with the beauty of the prospect over 'Isles that crown the Ægean deep:' but for an Englishman, Colonna has yet an additional interest, as the actual spot of Falconer's shipwreck. Pallas and Plato are forgotten in the recollection of Falconer and Campbell. This temple of Minerva may be seen at sea, from a great distance. In two journeys which I made, and one voyage to Colonna, the view from either side by land was less striking than the approach from the Isles."

With regard to the climate of Attica, Lord Byron

observes, that, " setting aside the magic of the name, and all those associations which it would be pedantic and superfluous to recapitulate; the verysituatio n of Athens would render it the favourite of all who have eyes for art or nature. The climate, to me at least, appeared a perpetual spring; during eight months I never passed a day without being as many hours on horseback: rain is extremely rare, snow never lies in the plains, and a cloudy day is an agreeable rarity. In Spain, Portugal, and every part of the east which I visited, except Ionia and Attica, I perceived no such superiority of climate to our own; and at Constantinople you might damn the climate, and complain of spleen, five days out of seven."

This remark on the excellence of the English climate, brings to recollection the saying of Charles the Second, who had himself been a traveller, and that for a long period. After his restoration, the discourse turned one day, in his presence, upon the pleasantness of the different countries on the continent of Europe. Some having praised one part and some another; the king said, " Well, gentlemen, you have all given your

opinions; and now I will let you know mine. I have lived abroad longer than any of you; but never saw the country yet where I could remain out of doors so many days in the year as in England."

Though Lord Byron traversed the Morea in every direction, and extended his travels over Eubœa, as well as the plain of Athens, and every part of Achaia, he paid diligent attention to literary pursuits, and not only sketched, but actually wrote some of those pieces which he has since published. Of his zeal for letters he gave an instance in exchanging a very valuable antique gem for a triglot manuscript Lexicon; and he also undertook the commission to get printed for his Greek tutor, a Romaic translation of Barthelemi's Travels of Anacharsis; but this work, on account of the heaviness of the expense, never appeared.

From the interest excited by the present aspect of affairs in the East, and the exertions now making by the Greeks to recover and establish their independence, we are naturally led to inquire into the opinion of so intelligent an observer as Lord Byron, concerning that people and their political state.

At the time when his lordship resided there, the condition of these oppressed descendants of heroes and sages became the frequent subject of conversation, among the foreigners who were assembled as it were from all parts of Europe, in that famous seat of antiquity. But it is mortifying to see the little sympathy which these visitors felt for the Greeks, and the general contempt in which those people were then held by the Franks.

Lord Byron gives the substance of what he heard from the best informed, and oldest residents, in these words :

" Mr. Fauvel, the French Consul, who has passed thirty years principally at Athens, and to whose talents as an artist, and manners as a gentleman, none who have known him can refuse their testimony, has frequently declared in my hearing that the Greeks do not deserve to be emancipated ; reasoning on the grounds of their " national and individual depravity ;" while he forgot that such depravity is to be attributed to causes which can only be removed by the measure he reprobates.—Mr. Roque, a French

merchant of respectability, long settled in Athens, asserted with the most amusing gravity, 'Sir, they are the same *canaille* that existed in the days of Themistocles;'—an alarming remark to the 'Laudatur temporis acti.' The ancients banished Themistocles; the moderns cheat Monsieur Roque; thus great men have ever been treated!

"In short, all the Franks who are fixtures, and most of the Englishmen, Germans, Danes, &c. of passage, came over by degrees to their opinion; on much the same grounds, that a Turk in England would condemn the nation by wholesale, because he was wronged by his lacquey, and overcharged by his washerwoman. Certainly, it was not a little staggering when the Sieurs Fauvel and Lusieri, the two greatest demagogues of the day, who divide between them the power of Pericles and the popularity of Cleon, and who puzzle the poor Waywode with perpetual differences, agreed in the utter condemnation, "nulla virtute redemptum," of the Greeks in general, and of the Athenians in particular. But it seems to me rather hard to declare so positively and pertinaciously, as almost every body has declared, that the

Greeks, because they are very bad, will never be better."

But though our noble countryman differed with these foreign residents at Athens, in the opinion that the Greeks were an unimprovable race; his own judgment of their renovation was not so favourable as that of Eton and Sonnini. "The Greeks, in opposition to these travellers," he says, "will never be independent; they will never be Sovereigns, as heretofore, and God forbid they ever should! But they may be subjects without being slaves. Our Colonies are not independent, but they are free and industrious; and such may Greece be hereafter. At present, like the Catholics of Ireland, and the Jews throughout the world, and such other cudgelled and heterodox people, they suffer all the moral and physical ills that can afflict humanity. Their life is a struggle against truth; they are vicious in their own defence. They are so unused to kindness, that when they occasionally meet with it, they look upon it with suspicion, as a dog often beaten snaps at your fingers, if you attempt to caress him. 'They are ungrateful, notoriously, abominably ungrateful!'—This is the general

cry. Now in the name of Nemesis, for what are they to be grateful? Where is the human being that ever conferred a benefit on Greek or Greeks? They are to be grateful to the Turks for their fetters, and to the Franks for their broken promises and lying counsels! They are to be grateful to the artist, who engraves their ruins, and to the antiquary who carries them away; to the traveller whose Janissary flogs them, and to the scribbler whose journal abuses them! This is the amount of their obligations to foreigners."

Recurring to the same subject, the noble author in another part of his journal observes: "The interposition of foreigners alone can emancipate the Greeks, who otherwise appear to have as small a chance of redemption from the Turks, as the Jews have from mankind in general. Of the ancient Greeks we know more than enough; at least the young men of Europe devote much of their time to the study of the Greek writers, and history, which would be more usefully spent in mastering their own. Of the moderns, we are perhaps more neglectful than they deserve; and while every man of any pretensions to

learning, is tiring out his youth, and often his age, in the study of the language, and of the harangues of the Athenian demagogues in favour of freedom, the real or supposed descendants of these sturdy republicans are left to the actual tyranny of their masters, although a very slight effort is required to shake off their chains. To talk, as the Greeks themselves do, of their rising again to their pristine superiority, would be ridiculous; as the rest of the world must resume its barbarism, after re-asserting the sovereignty of Greece: but there seems to be no very great obstacle, except in the apathy of the Franks, to their becoming an useful dependency, or even a free state, with a proper guarantee; under correction, however, be it spoken, for many, and well-informed men doubt the practicability even of this.

"The Greeks have never lost their hope, though they are now more divided in opinion on the subject of their probable deliverers. Religion recommends the Russians; but they have twice been deceived, and abandoned by that power; and the dreadful lesson they received after the Muscovite desertion in the Morea, has never been forgotten. The French they

dislike; although the subjugation of the rest of Europe will probably be attended by the deliverance of Continental Greece. The Islanders look to the English for succour, as they have very lately possessed themselves of the Ionian republic, Corfu excepted. But, whoever shall appear with arms in their hands will be welcome; and when that day arrives, Heaven have mercy on the Ottomans, for they cannot expect it from the Greeks."

Loose and general as these remarks are, and disinclined as the author was at that time to believe that the people of whom he spoke would struggle of themselves into independence; it is plain that even then the Greeks were animated by the hope of liberty and resuscitation. Where such a principle operates generally, the seeds of a revolution are sown, and the event is certain. Time nurtures the sentiment into a resolution, and continued oppression hastens the accomplishment. Though considered in all ages as fickle and treacherous, the Greeks have not wanted energy, or been deficient in sensibility. The propensity to commerce and navigation has enlarged their minds, and, by increasing the stock of knowledge, made them

more desirous of freedom. While Lord Byron and his companions at Athens were discussing the question, whether the Greeks merited emancipation, or could possibly effect it, the people themselves were silently employed, by the establishment of a marine, and the cultivation of letters, even among the islanders who were formerly the most ignorant part of the whole nation, in preparing the means of a revolution, which, though it may be attended with great difficulties, and be disgraced by many crimes, must ultimately prove successful; and who is there so lost to the sense of justice, the love of liberty, and the value of civilization, as to wish it were otherwise? Surely there is nothing in the history of modern Europe, since the fall of Byzantium, and the ascendancy of the Crescent on the shores of the Levant, that can or ought to excite one emotion of regret for the fate of the Ottoman empire. On the contrary, the interests of science and literature, policy and religion, are united in the desire that a monstrous fabric, originating in fraud, and upheld by the sword, should fall before the power of truth, and by the instrumentality of those who have suffered from its tyranny. That the Greeks have for ages been ground down to the lowest

pitch of humiliation under the oppressive force of this combination of imposture and despotism, cannot be denied; nor will any one presume to assert that their tyrants have in all that dark period done any thing to merit the good-will of the rest of mankind. Other conquerors have had the address to conciliate their new subjects, and to ensure, not only their obedience, but attachment, by the grant of honourable privileges, and the continuance of ancient customs; but the Turks, from first to last, have kept the Greeks in an insulated state, and treated them as an inferior order of beings, fit only to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water," for the servants of the Prophet. Is it therefore to be wondered, that a people so degraded by the usurpers of their inheritance, and so neglected by their fellow Christians, should in the lapse of years become mistrustful and hardened, treacherous and vindictive?—or, are they to be condemned if, on seeing the nations around them improving their condition, they adopted measures, and projected a plan of co-operation, secretly among themselves, for shaking off the yoke of bondage?

There were times, when the cause of such a people

would have roused even the most sluggish minds into sympathetic feeling, and have produced powerful exertions in their favour throughout the whole Christian world.

We have, however, lived to witness the prevalence of a cold, calculating policy, which, measuring every thing by the scale of interest, throws aside all the generous and exalted motives that directly lead to the accomplishment of great objects. Shut up in this contracted sphere, we seem to regard the other families of the earth as having no claim to our assistance; because, to use the phrase of the rustic in justification of his want of tenderness for his neighbours, "they belong to another parish."

There is but too much reason to believe, that the revolutions by which a great part of Europe has been agitated for near thirty years have rather weakened than increased the sentiment of benevolence. It is true, we have no lack of legislators and politicians, ready to give their advice for the renovation of states and the formation of constitutions; we have also adventurers enow full willing to take a part in any foreign

commotions; and, which is infinitely more to our credit, we have institutions on a large scale, and societies in abundance, having for their objects the circulation of the Scriptures and the conversion of infidels. But all this is private, not public feeling; and it may be questioned whether the glory of any nation is substantially promoted by the dissipation of individual energies, however praiseworthy may be the design, or honourable the motives of those who engage in it. What the British character gains on the score of charity, is no compensation for the loss of its dignity; and, therefore, he that has the general interests of humanity at heart, would rather see the senate and cabinet leading and directing the people, than following them in those beneficent works, which the impulse of zeal prompts them to undertake.

A crusade against the Mussulmans would no doubt be as unjust now, as it was madness in the eleventh century; but that is no reason why the efforts of the Greeks to recover their freedom should be damped by any of the European governments, and least of all, by the English, who, having secured an establishment

among them, ought from policy to have cultivated their confidence.

Instead of this, it calls for indignation to see our public journals debased by venting the blackest assertions upon the whole Greek community, for having asserted the natural right, which every nation has, to shake off the yoke of the conqueror. This glorious struggle, which is more to be justified than that of the North Americans against the English government, or that of the United Provinces against Spain, has been called a rebellion; though it is well known that the Greeks were never, in any legal sense of the term, subjects of the Ottomans. The number of years under which they have groaned in slavery, makes no difference in regard to the right of resistance; for the wrong originally inflicted having descended with an increase of injury to the present generation, renders insurrection as much a virtue in them as it would have been in their forefathers. And it is well, perhaps, that the Greeks have been so kept in a separated and persecuted state by the Turks, since hereby the retribution becomes more certain and equitable.

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The conflict is between the tyrant and the oppressed; between the natives of the soil and its invaders; so that as there is no reciprocity of duty, arising from mutual obligations and blended interests, the parties are, to all intents and purposes, legitimate belligerents. Much has been said on the sanguinary character of this warfare; but if hostilities have been carried on with more than customary fury, and if the Greeks in some, perhaps too many instances, have evinced a vengeful spirit, let it be impartially examined, whether they have exceeded their opponents in ferociousness. Savagely as they are said to have deported themselves in the heat of battle, and the hour of triumph, they had at all events the plea of retaliation to offer in justification of their excesses. That plea certainly is far from being admissible in extenuation of wanton cruelties; but let who will condemn the Greeks for carrying the barbarity of war to an unwarrantable height, their adversaries the Turks have no right to do so, since it was from them that they learnt both the example and the apology.

The observation which Lord Byron has thrown out in one of his notes, that the Greeks neither can nor

ought to enjoy sovereignty, is strange; especially as he is an advocate for their emancipation: but, if they are undeserving of independence, it will be difficult to show how they can be entitled to freedom, since that which incapacitates them for the one, must equally do so for the other. That these people have been long unused to the exercise of power, is no more an argument why they should continue to be deprived of it, than it would be to say that the lawful heir to an extensive domain ought to be kept out of it, because he has hitherto lived in poverty and ignorance. Such reasoning is as futile and mischievous in a political, as it would be in a legal point of view; but in the present case it becomes ridiculous, when used for the purpose of barring out the claim of the Greeks to their ancient inheritance; since to support the fallacy it must be shown that the character of the Turks is the most estimable of the two, and that their system of government is of a liberal description. Though Lord Byron does not venture to assert the latter proposition, he evidently appears to incline to the former; but then it merits notice, that his praise of the Turks is mixed with sarcastic reflections upon all the Christian states, not excepting even the English nation. Of the

intelligence and education of the Ottomans he gives a remarkable instance in an anecdote, which we must relate as we find it, and take of course upon the authority of the narrator, who might, perhaps, have rendered it clearer by explanation :

" I remember Mahmout, the grandson of Ali Pacha, asking whether my fellow-traveller and myself were in the upper or lower House of Parliament. Now this question from a boy of ten years old, proves that his education had not been neglected. It may be doubted whether an English boy, at that age, knows the difference of the Divan from a College of Dervises; but I am very sure a Spaniard does not. How little Mahmout, surrounded as he had been entirely by his tutors, had learned that there was such a thing as a Parliament, it were useless to conjecture, unless we suppose that his instructors did not confine his studies to the Koran."

Now the noble lord might, we think, have discovered the cause of this inquiry much more easily than by attributing it to the system of Turkish education. The question, there can be little doubt, resulted

from the quickness of the boy on hearing his English friends talking of the two houses of Parliament; a subject very natural to become frequent matter of conversation on their part; and therefore calculated to raise the curiosity of a sharp-witted youth, who wished to know every thing about a country the manners of which were so different from his own.

But thus it is, that wonders are made of trifling occurrences, for want of considering the causes out of which they spring; and hence also conclusions are often drawn, to the advantage or disadvantage of character, from adventitious circumstances, which only require to be investigated to prove their utter insignificance.

From Athens Lord Byron proceeded by sea to Constantinople, in the Salsette frigate, Captain Bathurst. While that ship lay in the Dardanelles, a discourse arose among some of the officers respecting the practicability of swimming across the Hellespont, and of thus verifying the truth of the story of Leander, so familiar to every classical reader. At length it was agreed on by Lord Byron and Lieutenant Ekenhead

of the above frigate, that they would make the trial; and this adventure accordingly took place on the 3rd of May, 1810. Of this memorable enterprise, his lordship gives the following account: "The whole distance from Abydos, the place whence we started, to our landing at Sestos on the other side, including the length we were carried by the current, was computed by those on board the frigate at upwards of four English miles; though the actual breadth is barely one. The rapidity of the current is such, that no boat can row directly across; and it may in some measure be estimated, from the circumstance of the whole distance being accomplished by one of the parties in an hour and five, and by the other, in an hour and ten minutes. The water was extremely cold, from the melting of the mountain snows. About three weeks before, we had made an attempt; but having ridden all the way from the Troad the same morning, and the water being of an icy chillness, we found it necessary to postpone the completion till the frigate anchored below the castles, when we swam the straits, as just stated, entering a considerable way above the European, and landing below the Asiatic, fort. Chavalier says that a young Jew swam the same distance for his mistress; and

Olivier mentions its having been done by a Neapolitan: but our consul at Tarragona remembered neither of those circumstances, and tried to dissuade us from the attempt. A number of the Salsette's crew were known to have accomplished a greater distance; and the only thing that surprised me was, that as doubts had been entertained of the truth of Leander's story, no traveller had ever endeavoured to ascertain its practicability."

Some years after this an English gentleman, named Turner, tried the same experiment and failed, in consequence of which he made a few remarks on Lord Byron's narrative; and though he did not directly call his veracity in question, he showed by his observations on the fact of Leander's swimming across twice in one night, his doubts of the modern as well as of the ancient tale.

In consequence of this, his lordship wrote the following letter to his publisher, Mr. Murray; dated Ravenna, February 21, 1821:

" DEAR SIR,

" In the 44th page, Vol. I. of Turner's Travels, (which you lately sent me,) it is stated-that Lord Byron, when he expressed such confidence of its practicability, seems to have forgotten that Leander swam both ways, with and against the tide; whereas he, (Lord Byron) only performed the easiest part of the task, by swimming *with* it, from Europe to Asia.

" I certainly could not have forgotten what is known to every school-boy, that Leander crossed in the night and returned towards the morning. My object was to ascertain that the Hellespont could be crossed at all by swimming, and in this Mr. Ekenhead and myself both succeeded; the one in an hour and ten minutes, the other in one hour and five minutes: the *tide* was *not* in our favour; on the contrary, the great difficulty was to bear up against the current; which, so far from helping us to the Asiatic side, set us down right towards the Archipelago. Neither Mr. Ekenhead, myself, nor, I will venture to add, any person on board the frigate, from Captain (now Admiral Bathurst) downwards, had any notion of a difference of the current on the Asiatic side, of which Mr. Turner speaks.

I never heard of it till this moment, or I would have taken the other course. Lieutenant Ekenhead's sole motive, and mine also, for setting out from the European side was, that the little Cape above Sestos was a more prominent starting-place, and the frigate which lay below, close under the Asiatic castle, formed a better point of view to move towards; and, in fact, we landed immediately below it. Mr. Turner says, 'whatever is thrown into the stream on this part of the European bank, *must* arrive at the Asiatic shore.' This is so far from being the case, that it *must* arrive in the Archipelago if left to the current, although a strong wind from the Asiatic side might have such an effect occasionally.

"Mr. Turner attempted the passage from the Asiatic side, and failed; 'after five-and-twenty minutes, in which he did not advance a hundred yards, he gave it up, from complete exhaustion. This is very possible, and might have occurred to him just as readily on the European side. I particularly stated, and Mr. Hobhouse has done so also, that we were obliged to make the real passage of one mile, extend to between *three* and *four*, owing to the force

of the stream. I can assure Mr. Turner, that his success would have given me great pleasure; as it would have added one more instance to the proofs of its practicability.—It is not quite fair in him to infer, that because *he* failed, Leander could not succeed.

"There are still four instances on record—a Neapolitan, a young Jew, Mr. Ekenhead, and myself: the two last were in the presence of hundreds of English witnesses. With regard to the difference of the current, I perceived none; it is favourable to the swimmer on neither side, but may be stemmed by plunging into the sea a considerable way above the opposite point of the coast, which the swimmer wishes to make, but still bearing up against it: it is strong; but if you calculate well, you may reach land. My own experience, and that of others, bids me pronounce the passage of Leander perfectly practicable: any young man in good health, and with tolerable skill in swimming, might succeed in it from *either* side. I was three hours in swimming across the Tagus, which is much more hazardous, being two hours longer than the passage of the Hellespont. Of what may be done in swimming, I shall mention one more instance. In

1818, the Chevalier Mingaldo, (a gentleman of Bassano,) a good swimmer, wished to swim with my friend Mr. Alexander Scott and myself; as he seemed particularly anxious on the subject, we indulged him.—We all three started from the Island of the Lido, and swam to Venice.—At the entrance of the Grand Canal, Scott and I were a good way a-head, and we saw no more of our foreign friend; which, however, was of no consequence, as there was a gondola to hold his clothes, and pick him up. Scott swam on till past the Rialto, where he got out—less from fatigue than *chill*, having been four hours in the water without rest, or stay, except what is to be obtained by floating on one's back,—this being the condition of our performance. I continued my course on to Santa Chiara, comprising the whole of the Grand Canal, (beside the distance from the Lido,) and got out where the Laguna once more opens to Fusina. I had been in the water, by my watch, without help or rest, and never touching ground or boat, four hours and twenty minutes. To this match, and during the greater part of the performance, Mr. Hoppner, the Consul General, was witness, and it is well known to many others. Mr. Turner can

easily verify the fact, if he thinks it worth while, by referring to Mr. Hoppner. The distance we could not accurately ascertain; it was of course considerable.

"I crossed the Hellespont in one hour and ten minutes only. I am now ten years older in time, and twenty in constitution, than I was when I passed the Dardanelles; and yet two years ago, I was capable of swimming four hours and twenty minutes; and I am sure that I could have continued two hours longer, though I had on a pair of trowsers—an accoutrement which by no means assists the performance. My two companions were also four hours in the water. Mingaldo might be about thirty years of age, Scott about six-and-twenty. With this experience in swimming, at different periods of age, not only on the spot, but elsewhere, of various persons, what is there to make me doubt that Leander's exploit was perfectly practicable? If three individuals did more than passing the Hellespont, why should he have done less? But Mr. Turner failed, and, naturally seeking a plausible excuse for his failure, lays the blame on the Asiatic side of the strait;—to me the cause is evi-

dent. He tried to swim *directly* across, instead of going higher up to take the vantage.—He might as well have tried to fly over Mount Athos.

" That a young Greek of the heroic times, in love, and with his limbs in full vigour, might have succeeded in such an attempt, is neither wonderful nor doubtful.—Whether he attempted it or not, is another question, because he might have had a *small boat* to save him the trouble.

I am, yours very truly,

BYRON.

" P. S. Mr. Turner says, that the swimming from Europe to Asia was 'the easiest part of the task.' I doubt whether Leander found it so, as it was the return; however, he had several hours between the intervals.—The argument of Mr. T. 'that, higher up or lower down, the strait widens so considerably, that he would save little labour by his starting,' is only good for indifferent swimmers. A man of any practice or skill, will always consider the distance less than the strength of the stream. If Ekenhead and myself had thought of crossing at the narrowest point, instead

of going up to the Cape above it, we should have been swept down to Tenedos. The strait is, however, not extraordinarily wide, even where it broadens above and below the forts; as the frigate was stationed some time in the Dardanelles waiting for the firman, I bathed often in the Strait, subsequently to our traject, and generally on the Asiatic side, without perceiving the greater strength of the opposing stream, by which Mr. Turner palliates his own failure. Our amusement in the small bay, which opens immediately below the Asiatic fort, was to dive for the land tortoises, which we flung in on purpose, as they amphibiously crawled along the bottom: this does not argue any greater violence of current than on the European shore. With regard to the modest insinuation, that we chose the European side as 'easier,' I appeal to Mr. Hobhouse and Admiral Bathurst, if it be true or no; poor Ekenhead being since dead.—Had we been aware of any such difference of current, as is asserted, we would at least have proved it, and were not likely to have given it up in the twenty-five minutes of Mr. Turner's own experiment."

This memorable adventure, however, was attended

with a fit of the ague, which produced the following pleasant stanzas from the noble imitator of Leander.

"If in the month of dark December
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont;

"If, when the wintry tempest roared
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus, of old, thy current poured—
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

"For *me*, degenerate, modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat to-day.

"But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo—and Lord knows what beside,
And swam for love, as I for glory;

"'Twere hard to say who fared the best.
Sad mortals! thus the Gods shall plague you:
He lost his labour, I my jest—
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague."

Having explored the Troad, with Homer in his hand, and satisfied himself, by personal observation, of the truth of the scenes represented in the Iliad, Lord Byron visited Constantinople; and, after making some excursions in Romania, returned again to Athens, where he and Mr. Hobhouse parted; the latter bending his course homewards, and his noble friend resolving to spend a few months longer in Greece.

During this last residence in Attica, his lordship wrote several of his lighter pieces, and some part of his more important works; for the enriching of which he was much indebted to the local knowledge he hereby acquired. But the whole story of his voyages in a ship of his own, of his residences in several islands, and particularly Mitylene (where he never was at all,) of his manner of study, his amours, and acts of eccentric benevolence,—though the narrative was alledged to be written by a person who had his information in the Archipelago and at Athens—was the fabrication of a needy adventurer in London, who wished to avail himself of the public curiosity, and to get a little money by a subject of popularity. Such is the tax which splendid genius is compelled to pay

for celebrity; and therefore he who is fortunate enough to gain a name among his contemporaries, must not be surprised at seeing things ascribed to him of which he is ashamed, or of having his acquaintance claimed by men whose company he would disdain. Horace was troubled with one of these impertinents, who stuck to him as closely as his shadow; "Prosequar hinc, quo nunc iter est tibi;" and our Pope was still more unlucky, in having his secret correspondence exposed by Curll. Lord Byron, therefore, may console himself with the reflection, that while the forgeries and falsehoods passed off in his name did him no injury, they furnished the impostor with a dinner.

After an absence of near three years, our noble poet re-visited his native shores; but without feeling that delight which usually exhilarates the mind on returning home; for some of his nearest friends were dead, and one beloved object, to whom he was attached in his earliest youth, was separated from him by an insurmountable bar.

CHAPTER VII.

Advantages of Travelling, to Poets;—Exhibited in Childe Harold.—Observations on that Poem.—Lines on the Princess Charlotte of Wales.—Address on opening Drury-Lane Theatre.—Sale of Newstead Abbey; and failure of the Contract.

FEW poets have been travellers; and yet the advantages arising from the observation of nature and society, in all the varieties of situation and life, are inestimably great to him who would give animation to his characters and beauty to his descriptions. But as he cannot pourtray accurately what he has not seen personally, he will be desirous of magnifying his sphere of knowledge. In the language of a great writer, "the poet who transfers his attention to nature and life,

ranges mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictures upon his mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. He observes with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes he wanders along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watches the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little; the plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth: and he who knows most, will have the most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

"All the appearances of nature, therefore, the inquirer will be careful to study, and every country which he surveys will contribute something to his poetical powers."—"His business, however, is to examine not the individual, but the species; to remark

general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He exhibits in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recall the original to every mind; and he omits the minuter circumstances which one may have remarked, and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness."

Whether this sound poetical canon operated on the mind of Lord Byron, when, like Imlac, in Johnson's beautiful romance, he resolved to eternize his name by immortal verse, is not easy to ascertain; but certain it is, that no modern writer has more effectually exemplified its value, as far as regards the power of composition, than the author of Childe Harold. It is to be regretted, however, that the noble writer did not pay proper attention to the remainder of the rule, and consider that "the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; who must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimates the happiness and misery of every condition, observe the power of all the passions, in

all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondency of decrepitude."

Romantic as all this may seem, it is sober truth, and the works of the greatest poets of antiquity, show that the description of nature in its external forms, and of art in its numerous varieties, is only subordinate to the moral object of improving, as well as entertaining, the mind. The writer who disregards this essential end of poetic composition, and who betrays an indifference to the effect likely to be produced by his representations, is guilty of a flagrant insult upon social order, for which all the elegance of versification, strength of language, and richness of imagery, cannot make an atonement.

It was the misfortune of Lord Byron, the causes and particulars of which it would be improper to examine, that ere he quitted his native land, his temper had become sour by opposition, and gloomy by disappointment. The most effective remedy in such

cases, next to the operation of religious principle, is the influence of good society. Of the one, unhappily, we can find no trace in any of his performances from first to last; and of the latter, the only correct judgment that can be formed, must be taken from the views which he has himself given of the human heart, and of human life. That he enlarged his stock of information, and invigorated his fancy, by a long sojourn on classic ground, cannot be denied; and it is to this residence in Greece, that the best of his works are indebted for those beauties which will render them imperishable. But if in his travels he cultivated an intimacy with nature, so far as to gather an immense stock of poetic materials, he did it at the expense of more substantial qualities, the loss of which no genius can possibly supply.

Having gone out into the world with this disposition, and bent his course to a region where man is seen almost in his worst condition, it ought not to excite wonder, that our noble poet should fail so egregiously as he has done in his moral paintings, however happily he may have succeeded in descriptive scenery, and the expression of the turbulent passions.

Like the philosopher Hobbes, who expatriated himself in times of public disturbance, and afterwards lived at enmity with all mankind, this young nobleman conceived an ill-will to the whole species, from disgust taken at the conduct of individuals; and hence it is that the personages which figure prominently in his works, are so extravagant in crime as to be perfectly unnatural in character. Young minds generally take delight in the bright side of things, and love to frame in their imagination, gay, lovely, and innocent objects. Lord Byron, on the contrary, at the outset of his career, appears to have made it a resolution to be pleased with nothing but moral deformity, and natural beauty, in sketching both of which he has shown the hand of a master.

The two first Cantos of his poem, entituled "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," published a few months after his return to England, afford a very decisive proof of this misanthropy, and perversion of moral feeling. We are told by the author, that he laid the plan of this poem in Albania, and prosecuted it at Athens, where, beyond doubt, it received some of its finest touches and most splendid ornaments.

The hint of adapting the style and stanza of Spenser, to a journal of travels and opinions, was taken from an observation of Dr. Beattie, who thought this species of composition admirably suited to humour and seriousness, description and pathos. Upon this idea, Lord Byron formed the plan of giving to the world a poetical history of his observations in foreign lands; and the thought was not only excellent in itself, but so perfectly original, and calculated to produce a work of so much instruction, as well as pleasure, that it is only to be lamented the noble author did not act perfectly up to the dignity of the sentiment. Instead of this, the reader is hurt at the very outset, at being compelled to become the companion of an unprincipled, impenitent profligate; for such Harold is represented, contrary to all our conceptions of chivalry; and, what is worse, without the least reason whatever being assigned for making the character vicious, instead of virtuous and honourable. Had the noble lord been writing a novel, he was at full liberty to have sketched out a monster of debauchery and profaneness, in as dark colours as it was possible for the imagination to figure human villany. But when, in undertaking a narrative of his own travels in foreign

countries, the noble lord thought proper to clothe his remarks in a poetic dress, and to convey them as the observations of a fictitious character, created for the purpose of enlivening the piece, he should have taken care to make that convenient personage a respectable, and not an abandoned, being. It surely was as easy to have done the one, as the other; and for his own credit, no less than for the elevation of the poem, it was incumbent on the author to do so; for otherwise, how could he expect that any deference should be paid to the opinions and remarks of one whom "none did love;" and for a very good reason too, considering that he

> "was a shameless wight,
> Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
> Few earthly things found favour in his sight,
> Save concubines and carnal company,
> And flaunting wassailers, of high and low degree!"

Yet such is the precious associate, whose sentiments on national character we are called upon to receive without questioning; though he is allowed to have disgraced his own name and lineage by vices of no ordinary magnitude.

Honest Bunyan might have taught the noble poet a much better lesson; for he sent out his pilgrim laden indeed with enormities, but desirous to get rid of the burthen of guilt, and to become a new man. Lord Byron, on the contrary, is resolved that the reader shall take his pilgrim "for better or worse," without being at the trouble of making him a penitent, or converting him to sobriety of thought, in the course of his long progress. Childe Harold, in short, presents to our contemplation, the anomalous compound of a knight without honour, and a pilgrim without religion.

From the description given of this goodly youth's paternal mansion, "a monastic dome, condemned to uses vile;"—and from many other circumstances in the piece, independently of the line of march traced out in the narrative, which corresponded with the route pursued by the author in his own travels, it was perfectly natural that the world should consider the pilgrim and the poet as intended for the same person.

It would indeed have been strange if any other conclusion had been drawn from such remarkable

coincidences: and therefore, when the noble lord felt uneasy at the suspicion, and was anxious to evade the application, he must have perceived the error into which he had fallen, and the gross indecorum he had committed, in obtruding such an offensive character before the eye of the public, for no moral object whatever. But let us hear what the author himself says by way of apology for the creation of this mirror of knighthood:

"I now leave Childe Harold to live his day, such as he is; it had been more agreeable, and certainly more easy, to have drawn an amiable character. It had been easy to varnish over his faults; to make him do more and express less: but he never was intended as an example, further than to show that early perversion of mind and morals leads to satiety of past pleasures, and disappointment in new ones, and that even the beauties of nature, and the stimulus of travel, (except ambition, the most powerful of all excitements,) are lost on a soul so constituted or rather misdirected. Had I proceeded with the poem, this character would have deepened as he drew to the close; for the outline which I once meant to fill up for him

was, with some exceptions, the sketch of a modern Timon, perhaps a poetical Zeluco."

This is an ingenious, but extremely forced plea for doing a gratuitous act of indiscretion, the necessity or propriety of which the author dares not attempt to justify. All that the excuse amounts to is this, that having drawn a reprobate, he did not choose to be at the trouble either of withdrawing or reforming him; though it is admitted that this Palmer without grace, is a garrulous companion "who says much and does little." It is to be hoped, however, that there are few persons so devoid of taste and sensibility as to take pleasure in sentiments avowedly conveyed to them through an impure channel; or who would thank the writer that should engage to instruct them by the urbanity of a Timon or the morality of a Zeluco.

Having said so much upon the character which deforms the poem, it becomes a more pleasing task to notice the merits of the composition. The first Canto is occupied chiefly by descriptive sketches of the scenery observed by the noble author in his travels through Portugal and Spain; which

pictures, particularly of the mountains behind Lisbon, and of the rich valleys in the interior, are exquisitely beautiful; but would have been still more so had the reflections interspersed been less severe and ludicrous. The representation of the Dæmon of Folly presiding at the famed convention of Cintra, is of the low burlesque cast; and would have disgraced Ariosto; though it seems to have been one of the author's studied and worst imitations of Spenser, forgetting that the Faery Queen being altogether an allegory, gave the poet full liberty to embody all the passions according to the effects they generally produce. Of a different description is the personification of "Battle," stamping his foot on the rock overhanging the plain of Talavera:

"Lo! where the giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deepening in the sun,
With death shot glowing in his hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon;
Restless it rolls, now fix'd, and now anon
Flashing afar—and at his iron feet
Destruction comes to mark what deeds are done,
For on this morn three potent nations meet
To shed before his shrine the blood he deems most sweet."

A bolder prosopopœia, or one better imagined and expressed, cannot easily be found in the whole range of ancient and modern poetry. Unlike the " Plume of Horror," or the " Eagle-winged Victory," described by our great epic poet, this gigantic figure is a distinct object, perfect in lineaments, tremendous in operation, and vested with all the attributes calculated to excite terror and admiration.

What follows, however, mars the sublime grandeur of the piece; for instead of the natural emotions of pity and commiseration, which should arise on viewing the field of suffering, the poet endeavours to excite a sneer of contempt and ridicule at the expense of humanity; when, turning from the lifeless remains of his fellow creatures heaped together on the ensanguined plain, he exclaims,

" Here shall they rot—Ambition's honour'd fools!"

Yet the noble author could be pathetic when he pleased; and this very Canto exhibits some touches of sensibility on the losses which he had sustained, in the death of friends; though the disposition to be

sarcastic breaks out so quickly after, as almost to render the sincerity of his serious feelings doubtful.

In the second Canto of the poem, the graphical powers of the author shine forth to still greater advantage than in the former part, and it is hardly possible for genius to exceed the descriptions of the ocean which are given in the narrative of the voyage up the Mediterranean. The sea appears to inspire the noble poet with more than usual animation; and he takes a delight in all that belongs to it, whether it be the dashing of the waves against the cliffs, the roaring of the winds, or the motion of the vessel as she rides proudly over the bounding billows.

The account of Albania, of Ali Pacha's court, and of the manners of the people, is picturesque and amusing; but it is amidst the ruins of Athens that Lord Byron finds himself in the seat of mental enjoyment. Here he paints with a rapid and vivid pencil, the rich and varied scenes extended before his eye, and those which crowd upon his imagination. But if the one are delineated with accuracy and spirit, the others exhibit a sombrous and sceptical hue.

Thus, in moralizing upon the vicissitudes which Greece has undergone, the poet says,

> "Even Gods must yield—religions take their turn:
> 'Twas Jove's 'tis Mahomet's; —and other creeds
> Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
> Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
> Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on reeds."

Much more, and worse, is added of the same appalling strain, tending, if it has any meaning at all, to bury in the dust every hope of immortality, and to destroy the whole of man's being with the "shattered cell" which he tenanted.

That one so young in years, of a liberal education, religiously brought up, and born to a noble inheritance, should thus early have his mind imbued with the poison of infidelity, is lamentable; but there is something in an open, unblushing avowal of impiety, that scares even those who profess indifference to modes of faith, and makes them ashamed of the association. The opponents of revelation have generally gone to work insidiously, and proceeded by degrees from doubt to Atheism; but still in all that downward,

serpentine course they have endeavoured to save appearances, and to cover their design against religion under the mask of some belief in a future state. Here, however, seated on a broken column, perhaps where Plato reasoned sublimely upon the internal evidences of the soul's immortality, is a poet who strives to cheat both himself and his neighbour out of that anchor of hope, and guide of life. Instead of deriving any consolation from this spring of virtue and principle of consolation, he thus treats with cruel mockery the very expectation of him who lifts his eye to Heaven——

> "Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know
> Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
> That being, thou wouldst be *again*, and go
> Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
> On earth no more, but mingled with the skies?
> Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
> Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies;
> That little urn saith more than thousand homilies."

These are not the profane musings of a fictitious personage, but the deliberate and formal reflections of the noble author, while meditating on the revolutions of

ages, among the ruins of Athens. Childe Harold, the wandering creature of the poet's imagination, appears very little after the introductory stanzas in which his evil qualities are so faithfully pourtrayed; and here he recedes altogether from the view: so that even the flimsy excuse is wanting that might be made for the ascription of proper language to particular characters. Though Lord Byron has been at the pains of denying that he had any real person in view when he took Harold for his hero, certain it is that for the most objectionable sentiments in the poem he is himself solely accountable; and he must therefore be considered as having brought them forward, not dramatically or by virtue of a poetical licence, but as his own unequivocal opinions.

In regard to the poem itself, the noble author would have acted judiciously in closing it with his first travels; for the two subsequent Cantos, which appeared at long intervals afterwards, have so little connexion with the former parts, and are written in a manner so very different from them, that the continuity is entirely lost.

Two very material objections have been made against this celebrated performance; the one is a charge of gross anachronism in the representation of modern events, and existing characters, under the antique garb of the age of chivalry; and the other is the profuse adoption of obsolete archaisms, which, however proper they might be in the time of Spenser, though even then they were ancient, are perfectly uncouth and ridiculous as applied to living manners.

The success of the poem must have been highly gratifying to the writer, who now saw his fame secured, and his character as a poet of the first order effectually acknowledged; not only in the repeated demands for new impressions of his work, but in the suffrages of the critics; not even omitting those who had so prematurely sentenced him to perpetual silence and oblivion.

Yet with all this celebrity, and the stock of knowledge that Lord Byron now possessed, he was certainly deficient in one branch of science, without which the most brilliant genius is little better than a meteor. A man may see much of the world, but

while he avoids cultivating the means of utility, and so long as he neglects the opportunities of turning his talents to the public advantage, whatever be his reputation on the score of wit, he will gain little respect for his wisdom.

Poetry is an elegant art, but it ought not to be made the business of life; especially by those who, from their condition and circumstances, are called upon to the discharge of high and varied duties. That the noble author of Childe Harold had profited little by his travels, in the study of man and political society, was evident from the connexions which he formed, and the pursuits he entered into, after his return to England. It seemed as if the crisis of all nations affected him no more than the storm of the elements;—and instead of taking any interest in the conflict upon which the existence of his own country depended, he showed, by his writings at this awful period, a manifest indifference to her fate. Where such an insensibility to national glory prevailed, it could not excite astonishment that the poet should be one of those who thought themselves en-

titled by their talents to insult the throne with impunity. But it was beneath the character of Lord Byron as a man of genius, it was degrading to him as a British Peer, and it was unpardonable in one so young in years, and whose course of life had by his own account been far enough from irreproachable, to publish, as he did, two scandalous stanzas in a newspaper, addressed to the Hope of England, not for the purpose of complimenting that accomplished Princess, but to convey the most stinging and shameful satire against her august father.

If any thing could possibly add to the indecency of this libellous act; it was that of including the obnoxious verses in the collection of the author's works, after the death of the lamented personage to whom they were inscribed; and whose feeling mind, if ever she read the abominable lines, must have been sorely wounded by the perusal.

It would be difficult to imagine a motive for an outrage so flagrantly offensive to every prescription of good manners; but let it be what it may, neither the

heat of party, nor the resentment excited by real or fancied wrongs, can ever palliate an impertinent inroad upon the privacies of domestic life.

Another instance of perverted talent, though of a different description, exhibited by the author of Childe Harold about this time, was in the poem which he wrote to be delivered at the opening of Drury-Lane Theatre. It is well known that the renovation of that establishment, after the conflagration which levelled the former building to the ground, was an object of such public interest, as to occasion a competition among the poets of the day for the honour of writing the introductory address. That distinction fell to the lot of Lord Byron, but with what justice, the following lines will show:

> "In one dread night, our city saw, and sigh'd
> Bow'd to the dust, the drama's tower of pride;
> In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
> Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.
> Ye who beheld (Oh sight admired and mourn'd,
> Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it adorn'd,)
> Through clouds of fire the massy fragments riven,
> Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from Heaven;
> Saw the long column of revolving flames
> Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames."

That imagination must have been put miserably to its shifts, for a comparison on such a subject, when it could find none more apt to the purpose, than the miraculous guide of the chosen people through the wilderness. Setting aside the profanity of the allusion, though it was an act of indecorum (to say the least of it) which ought to have caused an instant rejection of the piece, the figure chosen is the least analogous that could possibly have been adopted ;—for Israel's pillar was an object of trust, confidence, and preservation to those who followed it: whereas the fiery column, which " shook its red shadow" so furiously over the British metropolis, spread terror in every direction.

But it is inconceivable how any mind, animated by a proper respect for serious things, or paying the smallest deference to the religion of his country, could ever have thought of bringing together things and circumstances so totally dissimilar in themselves, and so improper on all accounts to be made illustrative of each other.

The rest of this hasty production is entitled to no remark; being made up of common-place allusions

—the customary appeal to liberality—and promises of continued exertions to deserve the public patronage.

It was in this year that Lord Byron endeavoured to dispose of the seat of Newstead Abbey, with the manorial lands immediately appertaining to it; and accordingly the whole property was sold for one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The purchaser, however, not being able to make good the payments within the stipulated time, the noble owner entered again some time after upon the possession of his ancient mansion; in addition to which he had, soon afterwards, the valuable acquisition of a coal-mine, worth fifty thousand pounds, discovered upon his estate in Rochdale.

CHAPTER VIII.

Publication of "The Giaour."—Plan of the Poem. —Its beauties and defects.—Use made of the story of Sisera.—Account of the "Bride of Abydos."—Its dangerous tendency.

THE success of Childe Harold, instead of stimulating the author to hasten the completion of his plan, encouraged him to publish within a few months another poem, of a very different construction, and in some respects of a far superior character. This was the Turkish tale of "The Giaour," which Lord Byron inscribed to the author of The Pleasures of Memory, "as a slight, but sincere, token of admiration of his genius, respect for his character, and gratitude for his friendship."

The story is simple, and very indistinctly told, but developes itself, at the conclusion, in a manner which

the reader must have easily anticipated. Hassan, a powerful Emir, discovers an intrigue between his favourite mistress Leila and a young Venetian, to whom no other name is given in the poem, than the common appellation of " the Giaour," or Infidel, by which Christians are called, out of contempt, among the zealous Mussulmans. The lover escapes with difficulty; but the poor female slave is carried off in a sack, and thrown into the sea. In the mean time, the fugitive gains the mountains, joins a band of robbers, and at length becomes their chief. At the head of this company, or tribe of Arnaouts, he has an opportunity of wreaking his revenge upon Hassan, who recognizes him in the fray, but falls beneath the arm of the detested Giaour. The victor then quits his predatory course of life, and throws himself into a monastery; not, however, in the spirit of devotion and penitence, but in a gloomy fit of despondence; still preserving under the cowl all the ferocity of his former character. In this state he dies, after revealing the particulars of his story, and rejecting alike all the counsels and consolations of the monk to whom he makes his confession. Such is the outline of this fable, as the

author calls his poem; but he has made ample amends for the irregularity of the narrative, and the deficiency of incident, by copiousness of reflection, and richness of description.

The performance opens with an indignant apostrophe to Greece, whose ancient and present state is forcibly contrasted:

> " Clime of the unforgotten brave,
> Whose land, from plain to mountain cave,
> Was Freedom's home, or Glory's grave!
> Shrine of the mighty can it be,
> That this is all remains of thee?"

The poet then goes on to paint more minutely and severely the character of the modern Greeks, who are represented as " callous, save to crime."

Of the low state to which the people are reduced, and the insecurity of even the humblest of them, a more striking instance could hardly be given than the picture of the fisherman working his wary course, after a long day of labour, to the shore, yet suspicious

of every point he passes, and dreading every speck that appears on the horizon:

" Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye, like boat
Of island pirate, or Mainote;
And, fearful for his light caïque,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumber'd with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an eastern night."

Nothing can be better imagined, or more happily expressed, than the manner in which the unhappy victim of eastern jealousy is sacrificed:

" Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank;
The calm wave rippled to the bank:
I watch'd it, as it sank—methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirr'd it more—'twas but the beam
That checquer'd o'er the living stream.

I gazed till, vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew:
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd the sight—
And all the hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in the coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves."

The account of the conflict between Hassan and his inveterate enemy, is wrought up with great animation; and presents to the reader's mind a very distinct picture of the danger to which travellers are exposed in the east, and of the manner in which hostilities are carried on when they are forced to contend for their lives. But the noble author of this fine poem has, in one instance, copied the sacred history literally, and that without noticing the circumstance in the slightest degree, in his appendix of notes. It is where the mother of the emir Hassan looks out anxiously for the arrival of her son:

" She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
The pasture green beneath her eye;
She saw the planets faintly twinkling,
'Tis twilight—sure his train is nigh!'

She could not rest in the garden bower
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower;
'Why comes he not—and his steeds are fleet,
Nor shrink they from the summer heat?
Why sends not the bridegroom his promised gift?
Is his heart more cold, or his barb less swift?'

"'Oh! false reproach! yon Tartar now
Has gain'd our nearest mountain's brow;
And warily the steep descends,
And now within the valley bends;
And he bears the gift at his saddle-bow—
How could I deem his courser slow!
Right well my largess shall repay
His welcome speed, and weary way.'"

This is a beautiful painting, but it is not original: for, as Parson Evans says, the "author has prayed his pible well;" so far, at least, as to select from the sacred records a passage well adapted to poetry.

"The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her; yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped?

have they not divided the prey? to every man a damsel or two? to Sisera, a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?" *Judges*, ch. v, 28—30.

This paraphrase is too plain to require any further observation; and yet the author would have acted wisely, if he had caught the spirit rather than the precise words of the inspired historian. Lord Byron has also been accused of having taken the picture of the monastic but impenitent Giaour from the character of Schedoni, in Mrs. Radcliffe's romance of "The Italian;" and it must be admitted that the resemblance is so strong as to preclude all idea of a casual coincidence. On the dying confession of the hero of this poem, the less that is said the better. It is of a piece with all the scenes where the noble poet has had an opportunity of showing a proper respect for religion. In a note upon the interlocution of the Friar and the Giaour, the author speaks out thus broadly and offensively: "The Monk's sermon is omitted. It seems to have had so little effect upon the patient, that it could have no hope from the reader. It may

be sufficient to say, that it was of a customary length, (as may be perceived from the interruptions and uneasiness of the penitent,) and was delivered in the nasal tone of all orthodox preachers."

Within a very short space, the "Giaour" was followed by the publication of another Turkish tale, entitled "The Bride of Abydos." The poem differs essentially from the former productions of the noble author. It is not, like them, rambling, episodical, and metaphysical; but consists of a story regularly constructed, and carried straight forward to its proper catastrophe, with almost a rigid regard to the dramatic unities of time and place.

Giaffir, the Pacha of a province on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, has two children, a son and daughter, of whom the latter only is a favourite. The tale opens with a representation of the old chief holding a Divan, and directing Haroun, the keeper of the Haram, to bring his daughter Zuleika into the council-chamber from her apartment. At this moment Selim, the son of Giaffir, knowing that his sister was walking in the cypress-grove, informs his father of it,

and acknowledges that it was at his solicitation she had left the women's tower to enjoy with him the beauty of nature. This information, instead of pleasing the father, provokes him to vent the bitterest reproaches upon his son, for indulging in effeminate pursuits:

"Son of a slave!—the Pacha said—
From unbelieving mother bred;
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that becomes a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where bubbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow!
Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire,
Would lend thee something of his fire!
Thou, who would see this battlement
By Christian cannon piece-meal rent—
Nay, tamely view old Stambol's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall—
Nor strike one stroke for life and death
Against the curs of Nazareth!—
Go—let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff—not the brand."

This torrent of wrath, though it calls forth no reply in words, acts in such a manner upon the youth, that his father cannot help perceiving in the resentment of his eye, the workings of a rebellious spirit.

The suspicion thus raised, produces a fresh storm of angry invective, which is only put a stop to by the entrance of Zuleika, who hears, with grief, her father's intention of marrying her immediately to Carasman Oglou, the Pacha of Magnesia. From the Divan, old Giaffir proceeds to the review of his troops, while his daughter retires to her room, there to mourn her hapless destiny. An interview follows between her and Selim, of the most tender description, in which Zuleika shows so much more of the lover, than the sister, that her feelings of affection are expressed even with a degree of warmth, which would hardly become any female to the legitimate object of her choice. Mutual vows of unchangeable attachment take place; and the parties separate with the pledge to meet again at twilight, in the gardens of the Haram. The second Canto opens with a description of evening, and a parallel between the story of Selim and Zuleika, and that of Hero and Leander, the idea

of which we may suppose arose from local circumstances.

At this meeting, Selim reveals the particulars of his birth, and surprises Zuleika with the information, that instead of being her brother, he is only her cousin; his father Abdallah having been poisoned by Giaffir, to get possession of his property and dignity; after which, to avoid discovery, the fratricide brought up his nephew as his own son. This story Selim had learnt from Haroun, the chief of the Haram guard, by whose assistance also he had been enabled, while Giaffir was upon a distant expedition, to range at liberty for some time; during which he visited the islands of the Archipelago, and became the leader of a band of pirates. These trusty followers he thought proper to leave in due season, that his absence might not be missed by Giaffir; though he still continued to keep up a correspondence with them, and that with a view of making the connexion serviceable to his design, of carrying off Zuleika to a place of safety, and making her his bride. The resolution of Giaffir to marry his daughter to the Carasman, hastens the crisis of the piece. The elopement of Zuleika is dis-

covered; and just as the pirates' boat reaches the place where the lovers are, the Pacha also arrives with his train: Selim having secured his bethrothed spouse in the cave, rushes forth to meet his comrades, but—

"One bound he made and gain'd the sand—
Already at his feet hath sunk
The foremost of the prying band;—
A gasping head, a quivering trunk.
Another falls, but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes:
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave;—
His boat appears—not five oars' length—
His comrades strain with desperate strength.—
Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
Wet, wild, unwearied, to the strand
They struggle—now they touch the land!
They come—'tis but to add to slaughter,
His heart's best blood is on the water!"

Thus Selim falls by the hand of his father's murderer, who, however, is so far punished that he finds

his daughter lifeless in the cave; having been overwhelmed by the terror of the scene, grief for her beloved, and the dread of what would befall her from the ire of her parent.

Such is the romance of the Bride of Abydos, the poetry of which cannot fail to charm every reader of taste; though the improbabilities of the tale are great, and the morality of it more than questionable. One of the finest descriptions in the piece is that of the dead body of Selim, floating on the Hellespont:

"Ye! who would o'er his relics weep,
Go—seek him where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep,
And cast on Lemnos' shore:
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay;
As, shaken on the restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow—
That hand—whose motion is not life—
Yet feebly seems to menace strife—
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
Then levell'd with the wave—
What recks it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?

The bird that tears that prostrate form,
Hath only robb'd the meaner worm."

This highly wrought dramatic romance, which in many respects will remind the reader of the Northern Minstrel, concludes with such a traditional article of belief as might naturally be expected to prevail in a land of superstition.

" There late was laid a marble stone ;
Eve saw it placed—the morrow gone !
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep-fix'd pillar to the shore ;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell—
Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave ;—
And there, by night, reclined, 'tis said,
Is seen a ghastly turban'd head ;—
And hence extended by the billow,
'Tis named " the Pirate-phantom's pillow !"
Where first it lay—that morning flower
Hath flourish'd—flourisheth this hour—
Alone—and dewy—coldly pure and pale—
As weeping beauty's cheek at sorrow's tale."

CHAPTER IX.

Publication of "The Corsair."—Beauties and defects of that Poem.—Supposed origin of the Piece.—Dedication to Thomas Moore.—Liberality of Lord Byron.—The Story of Conrad resumed in "Lara."—Character of that Poem.—Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte.

SO rapid and prolific was the genius of Lord Byron, on his return from the Levant, that scarcely had public curiosity been awakened and delighted by one poem, before another made its appearance, and commanded fresh applause. If "Childe Harold" exhibited originality of thought, eccentricity of character, and richness of description, the "Giaour" excited a stronger interest by its circumstances; while the "Bride of Abydos" had the higher poetic merit of unity of design, vigour of expression, and tenderness of sentiment.

Rising, as it were in the scale of emulation, the noble author now put forth his strength in a new effort; and while the world was as yet divided in opinion to which of his pieces the palm of pre-eminence should be ascribed, he produced a poem surpassing his former productions in strength of composition, perspicuity of narrative, and numerical harmony. Still attached to the romantic scenes among which he had so long wandered, and fond of pourtraying man as, perhaps, he had too often seen him in those regions, the poet took for the hero of his piece a piratical chief, who, at the head of a desperate band, had fixed his seat in one of those small islands which spot the bosom of the Ægean sea. Of Conrad the "Corsair," whose name on every shore was famed and feared, it is said that he was—

"a man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile and seldom heard to sigh—
Robust, but not Herculean—to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;—
They gaze and marvel how—and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.

Sun-burnt his cheek—his forehead high and pale,—
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals.
Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen.
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view;
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work'd feelings fearful, and yet undefined;
Such might it be—that none could truly tell—
Too close inquiry his stern glance could quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect could defy
The full encounter of his searching eye:
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny;
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
There was a laughing devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled—and mercy sigh'd farewell."

Yet with all these demoniacal qualities,—enough, one would suppose, to drive from him all human kind,—

we are told that Conrad felt the passion of love, and, what is more extraordinary, that he was beloved again. For this " man of one virtue and a thousand crimes," the amiable Medora is represented as feeling the most impassioned affection, while Conrad, with all his misanthropy, repaid her love with constancy.

The desire of Medora that Conrad should quit his dangerous vocation, is perfectly natural; nor less so is her intense anxiety for his safety when he is roving in quest of prey: but still there is something out of the usual current of things in the fondness with which this heart of excessive sensibility yearns over a ruffian. In their last meeting, just after the return of the pirates from a cruize, Medora thus relates the fears and hopes that had agitated her mind:

" Oh! many a night, on this lone couch reclined,
My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd the wind,
And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd thy sail—
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;
Though soft,—it seem'd the low prophetic dirge,
That mourn'd thee floating on the savage surge:
Still would I rise, to rouse the beacon fire,
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire;

And many a restless hour out-watch'd each star,
And morning came—and still thou wert afar.
Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom flew,
And day broke dreary on my troubled view,
And still I gazed and gazed, and not a prow
Was granted to my tears, my truth, my vow!
At length, 'twas noon, I hail'd and blest the mast
That met my sight—it near'd—alas! it past,
Another came—Oh, God! 'twas thine at last!—
Would that those days were over! wilt thou ne'er,
My Conrad! learn the joys of peace to share?
Sure thou hast more than wealth, and many a home,
As bright as this, invites us not to roam:
Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,
I only tremble when thou art not here;
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
Which flies from love, and languishes for strife—
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
Should war with nature and its better will!"

All this is beautifully pathetic; nor is it in the power of language to go beyond it in affectionate expression and earnestness of persuasion: still, when we view the object to which it is addressed, and consider him such as the poet has drawn his person and character, we cannot help wondering at the sort of love that could unite two hearts apparently so ill

fitted to each other. At the moment that Medora thus tenderly hung over Conrad, and strove to allure him to a peaceful life, she knew that he was a dark designing villain, who made it his business to prowl about for the ruin of the helpless, and ready to murder all that presumed to defend their property. Yet the woman who is made to feel thus passionately, never once alludes to the wickedness of Conrad's occupation, nor endeavours in any way to convince him of the injustice of his conduct. She trembles for his personal safety, but she has no concern for those who suffer by his outrages; and the only inducement that she offers to draw him from the predatory course of life which he follows, is that he has already realized wealth more than sufficient for his wants. Where such is the morality of the best character in the piece, what shall be thought of the love which is so finely exhibited?

Conrad, however, though not unmoved by the expostulations of Medora, ventures out again the same night upon another expedition. Having received intelligence that Seyd Pacha has collected an armament in the bay of Coron, for the purpose of exter-

minating the nest of pirates; the Corsair resolves to anticipate the attack by surprising the chief in his place of rendezvous. Accordingly before midnight he and his squadron arrive at the bay, where the Pacha's galleys are lying unsuspicious of any danger.

Conrad, in the dress of a dervise, then steals on shore, and gains admission to Seyd, by pretending to have escaped from the pirates, whose numbers and destination he is in the act of describing, when his people set fire to the ships of the Pacha, who instantly perceives the treacherous character of his visitor, and orders him to be seized. Conrad, upon this, throws off his disguise, and maintains his ground bravely, till his comrades arrive, and put the Ottomans to the rout; at which moment the palace is in flames. In the midst of the conflagration, Conrad, hearing female cries, hastens to the Haram, and rescues all the women from the devouring element, bearing in his own arms Gulnare, the chief favourite of the Pacha, to a place of safety. At this moment the Turks rally, and, being superior in numbers, attack the pirates, whom they defeat after an obstinate conflict, and take Conrad prisoner. The Pacha, exasperated by his loss, decrees

the Corsair to an excruciating death; when Gulnare, whose gratitude for her deliverance had kindled a more tender sentiment in her breast, intercedes for his life, but obtains only a short respite of the execution. In the mean time she gains admittance to the cell of the prisoner, and informs him of the fate that awaits him, unless he seizes the opportunity now afforded him of despatching his inexorable foe. Strange as it may seem, this man of a thousand crimes refuses the condition, and chooses rather to be impaled alive, than to be guilty of assassination; upon which Gulnare, more determined, plunges the poniard herself into the heart of Seyd, and, having bribed the guards, escapes with Conrad to a galley, of which he takes the command, and steers for his own island. On his arrival, he finds that Medora, when apprised of his misfortune, had fallen a victim to her grief; which loss affects him so much, that he leaves the place, and though diligently sought by his followers, Conrad is never afterwards found.

Such is the outline of the story of Conrad; from which it will be seen, that it is made up of slender materials, and those put together in a manner little

accordant with probability. The love which is made to counterbalance the crimes of Conrad, is of a very equivocal description; and his declining the poniard presented to him by Gulnare, is not only totally out of character, but preposterous in itself, for the poet admits that

> "Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame—
> His foe, if vanquish'd, had but shared the same."

But there are still greater defects than these; and by much the worst of them all is the spirit of infidelity that runs through the poem. In one place Conrad is represented as saying,

> "There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
> When all its elements convulsed—combined—
> Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
> And gnashing with impenitent Remorse;
> That juggling fiend—who never spake before,
> But cries "I warn'd thee!" when the deed is o'er.
> Vain voice! the spirit burning, but unbent,
> May writhe—rebel—the weak alone repent."

Thus also, in the same strain of impious defiance, this blasphemer is made to expatiate on his fallen condition:

" My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these—my bark—my sword—my love—my God.
The last I left in youth; he leaves me now,
And man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer,
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair,
It is enough—I breathe—and I can bear."

These are ghastly deformities, but they become peculiarly disgusting when love is made to associate with such detestable qualities; an alliance so unnatural and revolting that we are mistaken if any writer, of the most prurient description, ever before had an idea of it.

Yet there are beauties of the higher order of poetry scattered throughout the piece; of which the fine picture of Medora, when she receives the tidings of Conrad's fate, may be adduced as one of the best:

" The night-breeze freshens—she that day had past
In watching all that Hope proclaim'd a mast:
Sadly she sat—on high—Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore;
And there she wander'd heedless of the spray,
That dash'd her garments oft, and warn'd away.

She saw not—felt not this—nor dared depart,
Nor deem'd it cold—her chill was at her heart;
Till grew such certainty from that suspense,
His very sight had shock'd from life or sense!
It came at last—a sad and shatter'd boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought—
Some bleeding—all most wretched—these the few
Scarce knew how they escaped—this all they knew.
In silence darkling each appear'd to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's fate.
Something they would have said; but seem'd to fear
To trust their accents to Medora's ear.
She saw at once, yet sunk not,—trembled not—
Beneath her grief—that loneliness of lot:—
Within that meek fair form were feelings high,
That deem'd not till they found their energy.
While yet was Hope, they soften'd—flutter'd—wept;—
All lost—that softness died not—but it slept;—
And o'er its slumber rose that strength which said,
'With nothing left to love—there's nought to dread.'
'Tis more than nature's—like the burning might
Delirium gathers from the fever's height."

It has been observed that both for sketches of character, and leading incidents, the author of the Corsair was indebted to the very worst poem of his great contemporary, Walter Scott. But if "Rokeby"

is really here presented in a new form, the tale has certainly not lost any thing in the translation. The scaffolding may be perhaps the same, but the structure to which it is applied is different; and the imagery, the versification, and passion which distinguish Lord Byron's poem, far exceed the feeble and cumbrous machinery of the northern bard.

The noble author himself, in his notes, alludes to two remarkable instances in the history of Archbishop Blackburn, and that of a Monsieur La Fitte, a French revolutionist. But what these had to do with the Corsair, the reader is left to guess; and he may conjecture long enough before he can see any similarity at all between the cases thus adduced and the character of Conrad. With respect to the archbishop, it is surprising how the circumstance of his having, when a youth, sailed with Dampier and other buccaneers, could be considered as bearing any analogy at all to a history of pirates; since it is well known that the one class of men were smugglers, and the other robbers.

This poem of the "Corsair" was inscribed, in a very long and courtly address, to Thomas Moore, the

translator of Anacreon; upon whose character for poetical morality and personal courage the noble lord had, in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," exercised a degree of severity scarcely equalled in the range of modern satire. Forgetting all this, and wishing to make an alliance with those whom he had formerly denounced as a disgrace to Parnassus, Lord Byron was more profuse of his compliments, than he had even been of his sarcasms upon "the melodious advocate of lust." But the fit of indignant virtue was past, and the imitator of Juvenal now thought it a honour to be enrolled among the warmest friends and admirers of the modern Catullus. So much for the stability of literary morality, and the sincerity of that zeal which flows from personal resentment and originates not in public principle. Since then, the author of Childe Harold has given another, and a more remarkable proof of his attachment to the "poet of lewdness," by presenting him with the "Memoir of his own life and times;" but under the condition that the said valuable performance shall not appear in public, till death enables the survivor to write an epitaph and elegy upon the noble historian. This gift may seem very extraordinary; but when it is

known that the literary treasure has been actually purchased by the proprietor of Lord Byron's works, for the sum of two thousand pounds, and that the price was fixed by the donor himself, the nature of the present is explained clearly enough. Such a post-obit, however, was never before heard of; and it may bear a calculation, considering the chances of life, which will gain most by the bargain—the person who now enjoys the manuscript, or he for whose benefit it was sold. It is to be hoped that a stipulation has been made for a continuation of the history; and in that case, perhaps, the further adventures, observations and confessions of the noble author may, by enlarging the work, render it more valuable in itself, and more profitable to the publisher.

Though Lord Byron, in the dedication of his "Corsair," declared that this was the last time he should appear before the world as an author for some years, his resolution soon failed him; for within a few months he again published, anonymously indeed, two poems, of a very different character. The one which merits most notice, is the tale of "Lara;" an evident, though not an acknowledged, supplement to the story of Conrad.

It will be recollected that the latter personage, on returning to his isle and finding Medora no more, disappeared and could never afterwards be found. As the story of the Corsair closes abruptly, so that of "Lara" opens with his sudden arrival at the seat of his ancestors in Spain, attended only by a foreign page, after so long an absence that his very name was almost forgotten. Thus the description of this chieftain corresponds minutely in person, circumstance, and character with that of the leader of the pirates; but that the lord of a rich domain should degrade himself in this strange manner, is too much out of the line of probability to pass even by virtue of a poetical licence.

While, however, his vassals stand in awe of Lara, and all his neighbours are vainly inquisitive about his adventures "in those far lands where he had wandered long," accident very nearly brings his story to light. Being invited to a festival given by a neighbouring grandee, named Otho, one of the guests, Sir Ezzelin, who had been himself a great traveller, views Lara intently, and becomes at last so satisfied of his identity, as to exclaim with surprise,

"'Tis he! how came he thence? What doth he here?"

This of course, while it excites general surprise and curiosity, calls forth the resentment of Lara; and a quarrel ensues, which produces a challenge, to be decided the next day. This ends the first Canto, and the second opens with the meeting of the other chieftains, impatient to hear the charge of Sir Ezzelin against Lara; but the knight fails to make his appearance, which begetting suspicion in the mind of Otho, that some foul play had been practised, he takes up the cause of his absent friend, and a combat takes place. The conflict is short, and Otho falls, though not mortally wounded, by the superior dexterity of his adversary, who mounts his steed and takes his homeward path. The mysterious disappearance of Ezzelin, however, demands enquiry; and Lara, fearing the result, gathers around him a number of retainers, so that when Otho recovers, and the destined criminal is summoned to judgment, he is found "begirt by thousands, fresh from their feudal fetters, defying earth and confident of heaven."

Civil war follows, in which, though Lara has for some time the advantage, he afterwards falls in battle,

his last breath being received by his trusty page, Kaled, who is then discovered to be a female.

Of this poem it may truly be said, that it rises even above the Corsair in correctness of language, strength of conception, and elegance of description. In both pieces the author has shown his complete command of the heroic couplet; which it is a pity he should ever have forsaken in an affected imitation of some modern writers, whose popularity drew him aside from a style of composition to which they could not aspire. With respect to the principal character of this piece, it has the same faults as the author's former productions; displaying a mind fearlessly guilty, and yet tormented by that secret restlessness which ever attends the depravity of will.

The contrast between such a state of mental confusion and the harmony of external nature, is finely depicted in the following representation of Lara's walk by moon-light:

" It was the night—and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged beam:

So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the sky:
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.
These deck the shore: the waves their channel make
In windings light and mazy like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there:
Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night!
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deem'd, nor longer there he stood,
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate;
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate:
Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now—
No—no—the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt—unsparing—but a night like this,
A night of beauty mock'd such breast as his."

To the first edition of this poem was appended a tale, entituled "Jacqueline," written by Mr. Samuel

Rogers, and published at the request of the author of "Lara;" who "regretted that the tenacious courtesy of his friend did not permit him to place it where the judgment of the reader, concurring with his own, must have suggested its more appropriate station."

This simple story, the scene of which is laid in the south of France, is far more touching than its companion; though disfigured and rendered uncouth in the telling by the peculiarity of the verse. Lara makes the reader wonder and shudder, but Jacqueline melts the heart. Unlike the gloomy and frightful visions which the magic wand of Lord Byron raises to disturb the mind without improving it, the author of the "Pleasures of Memory" delights in painting scenes which actually occur in the chequered drama of humanity; and such as afford practical lessons for the correction, rather than the excitement, of the passions.

Nearly at the same time with Lara appeared an "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte;" which, from internal evidence, independently of other circumstances, the public voice attributed, without being mistaken, to Lord Byron. This slight performance, however,

could not add to the author's reputation; for it is made up of trite comparisons and ordinary thoughts, clothed in language which is sometimes ungrammatical, and never elegant. The verses are, in general, so doggrel, and the allusions so ludicrous, as almost to raise a question whether the noble author did not intend this ode as a burlesque, for the purpose of ridiculing some of his brother poets. If this was not the case, Lord Byron degraded himself when he penned the following lines, in which he compares Napoleon to Milo the Crotonian, wedged fast in the cleft of the tree, rent asunder by his own hands:

"He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound;
Chained by the trunk he vainly broke
Alone—how look'd he round?"

Simple and childish as this appears, it is outdone in absurdity by the allusion to Nebuchadnezzar;

"Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone;
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth,
So long obey'd—so little worth!"

It seems hardly possible to carry the "art of sinking" below all this; and yet there is another verse which, for Sternholdian sense and beauty, may compete with any thing in the records of church-yard poetry:

"Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality, are just
To all that pass away!"

CHAPTER X.

Marriage of Lord Byron. — Character of the Hebrew Melodies.—Observations on Devotional Poetry.—Publication of the Siege of Corinth and Parisina.—Criticisms on those Poems.

WHEN Lord Byron professed his intention of hanging up his harp for some years, he perhaps thought that marriage afforded as legitimate an excuse for withdrawing from the service of the Muses, as it formerly did from that of the tented field. Let this be as it may, the union which he contemplated, when he made that declaration, took place on the 2nd of January, 1815, at Seham, in Durham, with the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbank Noel, baronet, of that place. But the vows of poets are like those of lovers; and our noble author, could not resist the importunity of friends, or the solicitation of genius, to favour the

world with more of his performances. Shortly after this change of his condition, he produced what he called "Hebrew Melodies:" being a series of songs adapted to some of the most favourite airs that are still sung in the religious worship of the Jews; the music of which has been preserved by memory and tradition alone, without the assistance of written characters, probably ever since the dispersion of the tribes. But though the age and original of these airs must be left to conjecture; modern skill has grafted upon them a wildness and pathos that have rendered the choral service of the synagogue enchanting to the lovers of harmony. Impressed with a natural partiality for what may properly be called their national minstrelsy, two eminent performers, Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan, the one a singer of the first rank and the other a composer of eminence, applied to Lord Byron, through his friend Mr. Kinnaird, to favour them with some poetry suited to the popular music of their religious society.

His lordship readily assented, and the melodies appeared, first with the music, and afterwards without; though the application of the term to the words alone is an incongruity which ought to have been avoided.

Besides the technical objection that the appellation of melodies belongs only to the music, there is another of more serious import against the title, when the contents of the work are examined. To every religious mind the term Hebrew Melodies conveys an idea of sacred poetry, and nothing else. It brings both to the eye and the ear, the Royal Prophet and the other holy men of ancient days, whose inspirations have descended to us as the songs of Zion for private edification and public worship. In the work of Lord Byron, on the contrary, there is nothing of a devotional character at all; and scarcely any piece that can be properly called moral, taking the word in the sense of hortatory instruction. The first piece contains a personification of Night, without a single thought of religious character in it; in another Love is described by a profusion of metaphors; and in a third, Melancholy is pictured in a similar way; beautifully, it is true, but not as it might and ought to have been with a turn of pious sentiment, tending to raise the soul above the darkness and sorrow of this sublunary state, to the cloudless skies of a happier region.

Dr. Johnson, was of opinion that poetry and

devotion cannot harmonize; and he has elaborated the position with his wonted eloquence and ingenuity. "The essence of poetry," says that great critic, "is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but few as there are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression."

This, in the main, is perfectly just, yet it follows not that because the truths of religion interdict the ornaments of imagination, therefore the harmony of numbers may not be profitably employed in cheering the mind by those sublime considerations which can only be drawn from the fountain of immortality. Few as the topics of devotion may be, they are yet capable of receiving new illustrations and incitements from fresh views of the divine operations in nature and providence. But whether the mind can by varying its observations improve and enlarge the devotional principle or not, the volume of inspiration will ever continue to present rich and interesting

subjects for poetical translation. Of these Lord Byron might have found a copious variety, suited to lyrical composition, and admirably fitted to the peculiar music of the Jewish choir. The writings of the prophets abound in such passages; and Lowth on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews would have helped his lordship to the right choice and use of these sublime portions of scripture. But, instead of directing his attention to that inexhaustible treasure, he contented himself with two or three paraphrases of historical incidents, such as that of Jephthah's daughter, who is sacrificed contrary to the correct reading of the original; the death of Saul, and the destruction of Sennacherib's Host. This last is by far the best poem in the whole collection; but one stanza of it bears a striking resemblance to the old Scotch song of "the Flowers of the Forest." The stanza alluded to is this;

> "Like the leaves of the forest, when summer is green,
> That host, with their banners, at sun-set were seen;
> Like the leaves of the forest, when autumn hath blown,
> That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown."

It would be unjust to pass unnoticed part of one

poem, which touches with great elegance the highest and most endearing hope that can support the mind in the loss of friends, by enlivening it with the prospect of a re-union:

> "If that high world, which lies beyond
> Our own, surviving love endears;
> If there the cherish'd heart be found,
> The eye the same, except in tears:
>
> How welcome those untrodden spheres,
> How sweet this very hour to die!
> To soar from earth, and find all fears
> Lost in thy light—Eternity!"

That this is sweetly poetical cannot be denied; but the sentiment would have lost nothing, had the author avoided the hypothetical mode of expression, by which the consolation intended to be conveyed is so much weakened as to be rendered almost nugatory.

It is evident that, whatever be the merit of such productions as the Hebrew Melodies for musical purposes, or as literary compositions, they are ill adapted to improve the heart; and there is reason to

apprehend, that language like the following, supposed to be spoken by a Jew, is of a tendency to generate scepticism and encourage discontent, rather than to promote liberality of thinking, and the sentiment of mutual good-will, among the sons of Abraham :

"I have lost, for my faith, more than thou canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope—and in thine
The land and the life, which for him I resign."

It would be idle to enter upon an exposure of the error which the poet has here committed, in representing the expatriation of the Jews as a voluntary act of their own ; when every child among them knows that the judgment which fell upon their fathers, was a visitation for their iniquities.

How one of Lord Byron's principles, and those principles so unequivocally displayed to the world, came to undertake the task of writing lyrical poems upon scriptural subjects, might well excite surprise in light as well as serious minds; but if the attempt shows the versatility of his powers, the execution

affords a proof that something more than poetic genius is necessary to perform such a work properly.

The noble author's next publication was more in character, and displayed his talents to much greater advantage; being two poetical narratives, on very different subjects, but in both, as far as description and passion can produce interest, the reader will find his attention fixed, and his wonder raised, by scenes of horror and tenderness. The first of these poems is founded on the "Siege of Corinth," when the Turks finally wrested that city from the hands of the Venetians, after an assault, in which the whole garrison, with the governor Minotti, bravely perished. Independently of the suitableness of such an event to the power of Lord Byron's genius, the Fall of Corinth afforded local attractions, by the intimate knowledge which the poet had of the place and the surrounding objects. During his residence in Greece, he had crossed the Isthmus eight times, in his way from Attica to the Morea, either in one direction over the mountains, or in the other when passing from the gulph of Athens to that of Lepanto. Thus furnished with that topographical information which could not

be well obtained from books and maps, he was admirably qualified to depict the various operations and progress of the siege; while history supplied him with ample materials for an elaborate performance. Instead, however, of diversifying the scene by the introduction of several contrasted characters, and thereby giving a dramatic effect to the piece, the poet has bestowed all his efforts upon a single personage, and that one, as usual, of the very worst description. Alp, the renegade, who leads on the Turks in every attack against his own countrymen, is a being so atrociously villanous, that the inspiring him with love is almost libellous upon the constitution of human nature. This apostate, who is bent upon destroying all the inhabitants of Corinth, except the object of his affection and her family, takes his solitary walk on the night preceding the last assault, along the shore, and while contemplating the walls of the citadel, the breach already made, and the dead bodies of his own comrades scattered around, a female figure stands before him, in whom he recognizes Francesca, the daughter of the governor Minotti, and the "maid who should have been his bride."

In the dialogue that ensues, though there is no want of the power of remonstrance, that of persuasion fails where it should be most eloquent; but it is spent upon an obdurate mind, alike insensible to the voice of pity, and the influence of superstition. The gentle monitor endeavours to recall Alp to the religion he had left, by a sign in the heavens, which he beholds in stupid wonder, and suffers to pass without being moved by the warning. At this awful crisis the visitant disappears, and the renegado returns to the camp, to prepare for the desolation he has meditated, and the fate he has deserved. In the description of the assault the author has put forth all his energies, and in the meeting of Alp and Minotti, he has shown how capable he was, if he had been so minded, of pourtraying what the ancient moralist considered as a sight worthy of heaven—a good man struggling with adversity. Here the miserable outcast falls by a shot, after learning that Francesca died the preceding night; and Minotti, on retreating to the interior of the church, sets fire to a train, the explosion produced by which buries the Christians and the Infidels in one promiscuous heap.

That the poem is wrought up with a high strain of animation, must be admitted; yet it fails in the excitement of sympathy, for the want of bringing more moral action into play, by contrasting the characters in a variety of circumstances; and though too much praise cannot be paid to the descriptive parts, in some places the minuteness of detail is carried to a most disgusting length. What, for instance, can be more repulsive than the spectacle which caught the eye of the renegade Alp, in his midnight ramble?—

"And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold over the dead their carnival;
Gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb:
They were too busy to look at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh:
And their white tusks cranch'd o'er the whiter skull,
As it slipp'd through their jaws when their edge grew dull;
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed:
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew by the turbans that roll'd in the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:

Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest were shaven and bare;
The scalps were in the wild-dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs from human prey;
But he seiz'd on his share of a steed that lay,
Peck'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay."

This amplification of the "Obscœcnique canes, importunæque volucres," is as badly conceived as it is wofully expressed; being equally offensive to good taste and correct language. If any thing could add to the filthy horror of the picture, it is the levity with which the noble author treats a subject that ought to have been either thrown into shade, or mentioned with some regard to humanity.

The "Siege of Corinth" was accompanied by another poem, founded on the story of "Parisina," the wife of Nicholas, the third Duke of Ferrara, by whom she was put to death, for a criminal intercourse

with Hugo, the bastard son of that prince, who also deservedly suffered decapitation at the same time. Gibbon, in his posthumous history of the House of Brunswick, has briefly touched upon this shocking incident; but it was reserved for Lord Byron to embellish it with the ornaments of poetry. No moral mind however, can take pleasure in contemplating the operation and effects of monstrous passions: and therefore, the choice of such a story is a reflection upon the author, for endeavouring to engage the feelings of his readers in behalf of two persons who wilfully committed one of the foulest offences against nature. If we turn with horror from the Œdipus of Euripides, and the Mysterious Mother of Walpole, how much more must we be shocked at the open, unblushing advocacy of incest manifested in the tale of Parisina? In the two dramas, the crime belongs to one party only; and of course there is a just mixture of pity and indignation excited by the developement of the dreadful scene: but the present story exhibits both offenders as being equally well acquainted with their mutual relation, and yet continuing to indulge their forbidden loves, without the least compunction. Even when discovered, repentance does not follow;

and though the woman loses her senses by the shock, her paramour glories in his guilt, accuses his parent and sovereign of injustice, and dies impenitent. Such is the poem of Parisina, in which the noble author has taken the liberty, not indeed an unusual one with him, of paraphrasing the words of a modern writer without any acknowledgment. The passage alluded to is that where the guilty duchess appears before the assembled court, consisting of persons whose former admiration of her was such, that

> "had her eye in sorrow wept,
> A thousand warriors forth had leapt;
> A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
> And made her quarrel all their own."

Thus Burke, after the beautiful description which he has given of the unfortunate Maria Antoinette, in her splendour and fall, breaks out with this fine exclamation: "Little did I dream that when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace, concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I

should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her, in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult."

CHAPTER XI.

Birth of a Daughter to Lord Byron.—Differences with his Lady.—She quits his Residence.—Causes of the Separation.—The Lady's conduct approved.—Strange procedure of his Lordship.—The Editor of the Morning Chronicle's interference.—Lord Byron's Verses to his Wife, and Satire upon her Governess.—His Lordship leaves the kingdom.

OUR attention is now called from literary to personal history; and here also, by a fatality peculiarly unfortunate, we find more room for complaint and censure, than gratulation or praise, in the conduct of the noble person whose wayward course we are pursuing. Private memoirs are of so delicate a nature, that few circumstances can warrant the discussion of facts which, though made matter of public notoriety, involve the peace of families and the character of individuals. Still, however, there are some cases in

which, as it is impossible to be absolutely indifferent, so neither is it just to remain altogether silent. But in the present instance there can be little call for an apology, since, substantially, nothing is left to be told, more than what has already been made known to the world either in the form of narrative or in the nature of explanatory appeal, by those who in prudence should have avoided that tribunal.

At the beginning of 1815 Lord Byron married, and towards the close of the same year his lady brought him a daughter; so that, as the union, to all appearance, was one of love, the fruits of it gave the promise of permanent felicity. That prospect, however, was not realized; and the harmony which the birth of a first child seemed most likely to promote, was within a few weeks after that event so completely broken, that an absolute separation took place. Various causes were assigned for this rupture, but all of them concurring in the suspicion of infidelity against the noble husband—of which, if some were strong, others were slight and equivocal. Yet it could not be said, nor indeed was it even pretended, that the charges alledged were totally void of foundation. Enough appeared,

upon investigation, to convince those who acted with a sincere regard to both parties, that there was but little chance of tranquillity, where jealousy on the one side and levity on the other continually created new sources of disquiet. The share which Lord Byron had been unfortunately led to take in the direction of the concerns of Drury-Lane Theatre, contributed very much to increase his domestic trouble; by bringing about him a set of persons with whom a lady of high sensibility could not willingly associate. The scruples of such a mind every man of feeling will be careful to respect, because he sees in them the best security of his own happiness. Here, on the contrary, the repugnance to join that sort of society which the husband selected was treated with stern contempt; and those connexions were openly continued, the propriety of which became as much a matter of public scandal as of private disagreement. It might have been expected, that in the situation of the lady some regard would have been paid to her mental repose, if not to the opinion of the world: but great genius is above the ordinary rules of life; it scorns to be restricted in its pursuit of pleasure by the laws of decorum, and "at one slight bound it overleaps all bounds."

Considering how short a period had elapsed since the celebration of the nuptials, the age of the parties, and the amiable disposition of the lady, the very idea of giving her uneasiness was a disgraceful act of wanton barbarity, of which a virtuous mind would have been ashamed. Even to the capriciousness of temper a man of true generosity will be so far yielding as to sacrifice many things rather than occasion pain to others. If this be expedient in the common intercourse of mankind, how much more necessary is it in the state of matrimony, where blended interests require a reciprocal attention to each other's temper and inclination, for their mutual happiness?

But when a husband finds in his wife that her prejudices, if they must be called by that name, are on the side of virtue, and that even her love for himself is subordinate to that higher principle; his obligations to cherish her affections by the correctness of his own conduct, become stronger in proportion to the brightness of the example which he has continually in his view.

A blessing like this cannot be too highly estimated, especially in an age of relaxed moral discipline; and

therefore the man who sports with the sensibility of such a mind, by obtruding into his domestic circle meretricious characters, and persevering to do so after detection and in spite of remonstrance, whatever credit he may assume, or be entitled to for splendour of talents and freedom of spirit, he has little to boast of in morality of thinking. After marriage, even the most dissipated characters commonly affect, for a short time at least, somewhat of chastened habits; or f they do still hanker after licentious pleasures, they generally take care to wander from home, thereby endeavouring to avoid as much as possible such an exposure as they know will bring a disquiet house. But that man must have worked up his mind to a high pitch of contemptuous superiority over the ordinary principles by which the social relations are maintained in harmony, who can presume to bring depravity under his roof, and introduce vice to his table.

What causes besides there might be for serious offence, can only be surmised; but associates of the above description, were certainly not of a nature to be pleasing either to a virtuous wife or her friends. The

one felt sensibly her degradation, and complained without effect, the others could only pity and remain absent. At length patience was exhausted, and a temporary separation occurred; during which, an amicable correspondence was carried on for a few weeks, but without producing any change of conduct or such promises of amendment as the party aggrieved had a right to demand. In such a state of irritable suspense it is impossible to keep curiosity hoodwinked, and many particulars thus came to light which otherwise perhaps would have remained buried for ever in silence. The beginning of domestic uneasiness is like the dropping of water; and that which by concession and liberality might have been at first easily gathered up, or absorbed in oblivion, swells into a stream, till it defeats every attempt to prevent its progress.

On the one side no measures were taken, but those which common prudence suggested, and which the highest wisdom must have approved; for the case was laid in consultation before the nearest relatives, who saw enough to convince them that the chance of happiness was hopeless where so much duplicity had been practised. But though satisfied in their own minds

after a very close and delicate inquiry, that a reconciliation was neither practicable nor even advisable, they thought it safest to take the opinion of an eminent civilian upon the case; and when it is known that the judgment of Dr. Lushington was decidedly in favour of Lady Byron's resolution to live apart from her husband, there will be few persons hardy enough to call the propriety of her determination in question. That determination was a very painful, but it was also a very deliberate, act of duty; and did not result from mere capriciousness of temper, or jealousy conceived on false grounds, and nourished by base insinuations.

Now what was the line of conduct pursued on the other side, where, from intellectual superiority, and natural dignity of feeling, it might have been expected that the utmost delicacy of reserve would have distinguished the deportment of the husband, so as to have kept him from all conversation and communion on the subject of his domestic differences, except with those who were immediately interested in them? Instead of weighing seriously the particulars of his conduct, entering into an explanation of those

points which were most suspicious, and frankly confessing what might be wrong, he delivers his sentiments in harmonious verse, and talks of his own wounded feelings in heroics, without paying the slightest regard to the feelings of others. But this was not all; for this man, of exquisite sensibility, calls to his counsel, not a professional advocate, or a relative of dignified rank,—in both of whom he might have reposed his secrets with safety,—but the proprietor and editor of a newspaper, to whose honest hands and immaculate honour he entrusts the letters of his spouse and his own verses. The consequence was, as might have been easily predicted, the world soon became acquainted with the particulars of a separation, which, whatever might be its expediency under the circumstances of the noble parties, was not of a nature to be made a matter of public discourse. The part which the late Mr. Perry took in this unpleasant affair did him little credit; for he made the Morning Chronicle a stage of exhibition, and strutted about on it with an air of as much consequence as if this concern had been one in which he had a personal interest. But when the editor threatened the father of Lady Byron with the publi-

cation of his daughter's letters, his wonted acuteness of intellect seems to have been obtunded by his excessive vanity; or else he would not have overlooked the plain questions naturally arising, how he came into possession of them, and what authority he had to publish the correspondence of two persons, without the consent of both having been previously obtained.

Lord Byron in one of his poems has paid a tribute of respect to the unfortunate Lord Falkland, who some years ago was killed in a duel. But the great Earl of Clarendon has bestowed a finer encomium upon the illustrious ancestor of that nobleman, who fell in the battle of Newbury.

"One thing," says the noble historian, "Lord Falkland could never bring himself to, while Secretary of State, and that was the liberty of opening letters, upon a suspicion that they might contain matter of dangerous consequence; which he thought such a violation of the law of nature, that no qualification of office could justify him in the trespass."

This was certainly carrying the sense of honour

very far; but what would such a person have thought of the man who, in a family quarrel, could make the conductor of a weekly paper the depository of his secrets, and entrust to his hands, not for his private perusal, but for publication, the letters that had passed between himself and his wife?

The friendship of Lord Byron and the proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, was formed on a literary and political basis; to poetry and politics, therefore, that relation should have been rigidly confined. The advantage of it was all on one side; and there can be no doubt but that the Journalist duly appreciated the value of a connexion, which so materially contributed to uphold and extend the popularity of his paper. But for that very reason, this man was one of the last persons in the world to whom Lord Byron should have confided the secrets of his heart and the state of his house; for it was not in the nature of things that such an adviser could be impartial, even supposing that in other respects he might be an unobjectionable arbiter of family differences. The manner in which he deported himself in a business so

imprudently entrusted to his management, showed his zeal more than his discretion or politeness; for he went the length of venting reproaches upon the lady's "conduct in tearing herself from the bosom of her husband;" he even threatened a disclosure of secrets, and ventured to assert that there existed a foul conspiracy against his noble client. Thus the modern Cato, who affected to seat himself in the censorial chair, over-acted his part, and "by his decision more embroiled the fray." Matters were now come to a pass which made a reconciliation impracticable; but the wonder was that amidst all this newspaper strife, the husband should appear passive as far as regarded the exercise of his legal rights. Had the noble lord been conscious that his own "withers were unwrung," he certainly would have exerted himself to the utmost in the defence of his natural privileges, even though he might not think it necessary, or consistent with his dignity, to enter upon an explanatory justification of his conduct. If he was the victim of a conspiracy, justice required that the plot should be detected and the agents punished; and if the peace of his family had been broken by

any artifices or mis-representation, it was incumbent upon him as a husband and a father, to unravel the fraud for the establishment of his honour.

Instead of taking the straight and obvious course which every man of common virtue and understanding would have adopted in such an exigency, this exalted genius soars into the clouds, and leaving his tenderest concerns on earth to be discussed in a printing-office, solaces his afflicted mind by composing pathetic and caustic verses.

With that grief which is expressed in the artificial jingle of rhyme, no reflecting mind, accustomed to the genuine workings of the heart, will be inclined to sympathize. Sorrow is usually of a silent and retiring nature, especially in those cases where the exercise of the judgment is required to provide a remedy for an evil that cannot be cured by lamentation.

Some man of fine imagination wrote very beautiful lines upon his wife's coffin, and the next day

addressed as tender a sonnet to the second object of his affections.

Thus Lord Byron, when it was natural for him to have been employed in vigorous measures for the restoration of his domestic harmony, the vindication of his character, and the assertion of his rights, contented himself with circulating among his acquaintance, and sending to the newspapers, a poem to his wife and a satire on her friend.

The former piece, entitled "Fare thee well," was cried up as one of the most exquisite productions that had ever issued from human genius; and it was considered, by those who could see the heavenly luminaries in a muddy pool, as being completely demonstrative of the noble writer's purity of heart. But there were minds of sterner mould, who, refusing to be caught by the cant of sensibility, demanded why the noble lord, instead of whining over his desk, did not rouse his moral powers into action. That the verses which he published so ostentatiously were very pretty, nobody pretended to deny; but here lay the mischief, for they were too pretty to be sincere; and they

exhibited all the quaintness of a writer who aimed to draw tears from his readers while he shed none himself. The noble poet affected a wonderful attachment to his young and amiable lady, to whom he had been united little more than a year; and he also mourned in very harmonious numbers over his infant child, of three months old: but though all of this might have passed as a private effusion of poetic feeling, it lost its effect when sent into the world through the channel of the periodical press. Then the design was seen through by all who were not wilfully blind; and every man of discernment despised the affectation which, under the guise of fondness, conveyed an envenomed sting of reproach. Now as the author was fully aware, when he endeavoured to excite commiseration by his piteous wailing, that in proportion as he raised pity for himself, he kindled a flame of resentment against his wife as the cause of his misery, what could be thought of the delicacy of his sentiments or of the truth of his professions?

Thus, let hypocrisy varnish ever so deeply, truth will escape through some crack or other; and Lord Byron was so ill qualified for keeping on the mask,

that by reflecting upon the "unforgiving spirit" of his wife, he at once stumbled into a confession of his own errors, and thereby furnished a ground for suspicion that the offence could not have been slight which was attended with such serious consequences. There are women of wanton minds who will abandon the path of rectitude and honour without compunction; but no virtuous wife will forsake the habitation and company of her husband, unless strongly impelled to that measure, by something painfully distressing in his conduct.

How far Lady Byron was justified in the proceeding which she spontaneously adopted, and in the propriety of which she was supported by all her friends, can only be estimated by the excellence of her character, when contrasted with that of her husband: but as her sacrifices were great, her resolution could only have been formed from a resentment of more than ordinary wrongs. It deserves serious consideration also that while the lady was arming herself with evidences to vindicate the separation into which she had been driven, her lord made preparations for a final departure from the kingdom. This determination was stranger

than all the rest; for, if it did not amount to an absolute desertion, through a consciousness of impropriety, it betrayed a want of that firmness which is the characteristic of upright intentions. But before he left England the noble lord put into circulation another production of his muse, occasioned by the peculiarity of his domestic circumstances. Never, however, did the history of perverted talent exhibit a more disgraceful composition than this "Sketch from Private Life." The person whose character was here so grossly vilified was the governess and companion of Lady Byron; and her only fault appears to have been the very uncommon one of retaining the confidence and affectionate regard of her pupil. There must, indeed, have been some valuable qualities in such a female; for though, according to the liberal report of her noble traducer, "she was born in a garret, and bred in a kitchen," it is evident that she discharged her duty faithfully in modelling the mind of the young lady whose education was entrusted to her care. This is manifest from the praises which the noble lord bestowed upon his wife after their separation; for those virtues which he acknowledged to shine so pre-eminently in her, must, at least in some

degree, have been the effect of mental culture. Thus if Lord Byron was honest in the declaration which he made of his own affection, and of his lady's goodness, he, without intending it, paid a compliment to the person by whom those graces were cherished which he pretended so much to admire. The old maxim seems to hold equally good in morals as in science—that where two have an affinity in principle, they agree in their associations; so that what one party loves, the other cannot hate. But even where a man may not altogether approve of the same objects with his wife, he will, if he has any delicacy of mind, forbear to wound her feelings by the expression of his dislike. He will not vilify a female who has from her infancy enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the woman whom he loves; and he will scorn to hold her up, on account of her humble origin and homely features, to public ridicule. Yet all this, and worse than this, Lord Byron was guilty of at the very time when he affected the tenderest concern for his lady, and the bitterest grief at the resolution which she had formed of leaving him for ever. While mourning his widowed lot, and pouring out his lamentations in elegiac verse, such was his rancour and malice that he could write and publish

a poetical anathema against a defenceless woman, whose skin he compared to parchment, and the colour of her blood to saffron. Having worked up his spirit to this diabolical pitch, he proceeded to express his horrible wish, that the poor object of his vengeance might experience despair in her last moments, and find afterwards a sleepless grave. Beyond this it was hardly possible for the malignant passions to go; and yet the accumulated curses, which flow on with increasing virulence in each line, show that the author had worked himself up to the very height of fury, so that it might truly have been said of him, "Hell grew darker at his frown."

When this 'Sketch' made its appearance, even the admirers of the noble lord became alarmed for his reputation; and it was said that the verses were never intended for the public eye. This, however, was an arrant falsehood, for the author himself distributed copies among his acquaintances, and sent others to the editors of some of the public journals; though if the fact had been as his apologists stated, the excuse could have availed nothing in a moral point of view, since the very writing of such a piece

was in itself incompatible with the principles of honour, and an act that showed the utmost malignity of mind. Had the injured party sought redress against the noble traducer in a court of justice, the plea of having composed the libel for his own private fancy, would have been little attended to by an upright judge, and an intelligent jury; especially when it came out, as the fact must in evidence, that the copies in circulation proceeded from the author; and consequently that the publication could not have been altogether without his privity.

Yet perhaps it was not much to be regretted, that this atrocious compound of hatred and impiety made its appearance when it did, since it afforded a complete illustration of the hypocritical character of the lines bearing the title of "Fare thee well;" so that if any persons were cheated by the affected sensibility displayed in that performance, they had only to read the "Sketch from Private Life," to exclaim with the offended husband in the comedy, "Oh! confound your sentiments." All this took place in the months of March and April; and while the public were anxiously waiting to see the course which the noble lord would adopt for re-

claiming his rights and vindicating his character, he suddenly left the kingdom, with the resolution never to return. This was another inexplicable proceeding, for which Lord Byron's most ardent admirers could not account; and though some strong necessity must have arisen for so extraordinary an abandonment of high duties and near connexions, no reason was ever assigned for the dereliction, either by his lordship or his friends. There were some, however, who considered this abdication as a full justification of the lady's conduct, in having withdrawn from such a partner; and one writer, of no common powers, published a poem on the occasion, entitled, "Lines on the departure of a great Poet;" the introduction to which is thus vigorously expressed:

"From native England, that endured too long
The ceaseless burden of his impious song;
His mad career of crimes and follies run,
And grey in vice, when life was scarce begun;
He goes, in foreign lands prepared to find
A life more suited to his guilty mind;
Where other climes new pleasures may supply
For that pall'd taste, and that unhallow'd eye:—
Wisely he seeks some yet untrodden shore,
For those who know him less may prize him more."

CHAPTER XII.

On the Banishment of Ovid.—Lord Byron's Visit to the Field of Waterloo.—Fortress of Ehrenbreitstein.—French General Marceau.—Pyramid of Bones at Morat.—Clarens, on the Lake of Geneva.—Rousseau.—Monks of St. Bernard.—Superstition and Infidelity contrasted.—Description of the Jungfraw.—Departure for Italy.

IT is not improbable but that the exile of Lord Byron, though his own spontaneous act, may, in a distant age, form as curious a question in literary history, as the banishment of Ovid has hitherto proved to commentators. The Roman poet, if we are to take his own word for it, was not sent to waste the remainder of his life on the borders of the Euxine, for any fault of his own, but simply because it was his misfortune to have witnessed something which he ought not to have seen. Hence conjectures have multiplied to

the wildest extent, to ascertain the cause of this harsh measure; and, in order to save the character of a favourite writer, that of Augustus has been calumniated without mercy; though, luckily for his reputation, the matters alledged against him are fully disproved by the evidence of facts and dates. But there is still more than this to be said in favour of the emperor; for if the poet was actually the victim of imperial tyranny, it is scarcely to be believed that he would have idolized the author of his wrongs. Yet Ovid, after his exile, praised Augustus in the highest terms for his liberality, and even when he had nothing more to hope or dread from his power, the poet erected an altar to his memory among the Getæ, in whose country he resided.

Such being the fact, it is reasonable to suppose that the misfortune of this ingenious writer was the consequence of his own indiscretion, and that it did not proceed from the capriciousness of despotism. There is nothing in the known history of Ovid to make one think more favourably of him; and his writings are alone sufficient to induce the belief that his relegation, notwithstanding his insinuation to the

contrary, was a punishment justly inflicted upon him for his criminality.

The author of Childe Harold has also endeavoured to persuade the world that he is a persecuted man; and that his exile, though not a judicial stretch of power, has been produced by oppression of a severer description. It must, perhaps, be left to posterity to determine the truth of this point, when time shall have developed those scenes and circumstances which prudence now buries in secresy: in the mean time, however, it ill becomes a man to complain of what he had it in his power to avoid; and, therefore, he who omits to perform those things which are necessary for the preservation of his own peace and character, must be content to endure the consequences of his neglect. If Lord Byron, instead of guarding the various important trusts belonging to him in his own land, thought it expedient to become a wanderer upon earth, he may thank himself for the hard judgment which the public has formed, and still continues to entertain of that conduct which led him to renounce his country, on the extraordinary pretence that his wife had forsaken him. The laws were sufficiently strong, and

the administration of them pure enough, to have afforded him redress under his circumstances; and therefore if he did not avail himself of the common protection which the legal courts of the kingdom indiscriminately grant to all subjects, it can only be ascribed to that discretion which of two evils chooses the least, and inclines to submit to an unpleasant privation, rather than suffer more acutely by a fearful exposure.

Having thus taken his option, the noble lord crossed over to France, through which he passed rapidly to Brussels, taking in his way a survey of the field of Waterloo. Twelve months had not elapsed since the decision of empires had taken place on this memorable spot, where mad ambition received its death-blow, and the rage for war its most effectual check: notwithstanding which, the jaundiced mind of the poet could contemplate this interesting spectacle without a single sentiment of patriotism, or philanthropy. What his feelings would have been had Napoleon triumphed instead of being overthrown, we can only surmise from what he has expressed in the following note:—

"My guide from Mont St. Jean over the field seemed intelligent and accurate. The place where Major Howard fell, was not far from two tall and solitary trees (there was a third cut down or shivered in the battle) which stand a few yards from each other at a pathway's side. Beneath these he died, and was buried. The body has since been removed to England. A small hollow for the present marks where it lay, but will probably be soon effaced; the plough has been upon it, and the grain is. After pointing out the different spots where Picton and other gallant men had perished; the guide said, 'Here Major Howard lay; I was near him when wounded.' I told him my relationship, and he seemed then still more anxious to point out the particular spot and circumstances. The place is one of the most marked in the field, from the peculiarity of the two trees above mentioned. I went on horseback twice over the field, comparing it with my recollection of similar scenes. As a plain, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination. I have viewed with attention those of Platæa, Troy, Mantinea,

Leuctra, Chœronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St. Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little but a better cause, and that undefinable but impressive halo, which the lapse of ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except perhaps the last mentioned."

Though it is not very easy to discern any clear meaning through this cloud of words, enough appears to show the dark mind of the writer, and his total incompetency either to form an impartial judgment of the circumstances of his own time, or a correct one of remoter ages. Had he not been completely under the influence of self-will, which perverts every object and incident to the worst purposes, he would have seen in the defeat of the French at Waterloo a greater triumph to humanity and liberty than that of the Persians at Marathon; for in the one case Greece alone was saved, whereas in the other all Europe was delivered from a restless and insatiable spirit thirsting for universal dominion, and scrupling no means to accomplish that detestable object. Whatever pretences, therefore, a man may set up to liberality of sentiment, he can neither have any true sense of freedom, a de-

sire of peace, nor a proper love of his native country, who can bring himself to regret the humiliation of a power which for ages past, and in none more than the present, has been the common disturber of the world. Whether in a monarchical or republican state; whether governed by Louis the Fourteenth, or Napoleon Buonaparte, France has invariably manifested a disposition to encroach upon the rights and liberties of all other nations. The canting jargon, therefore, of Lord Byron, and those who, like him, can see no glory but in usurpation, is an insult upon common sense, and a libel against humanity; since, if it has any meaning at all, it amounts to a justification of Napoleon in his invasion of Spain, his attack on Russia, and his attempt to make himself master of the world. Providentially the cupidity of this monster proved too much for his cunning; so that after making the earth tremble under him, he became an object of contempt, with none to pity him, unless it were the many who had profited by his crimes, and the few who admired him for nothing else.

Having gratified his curiosity, and indulged his spleen, in contemplating a scene where others of his

countryman had been warmed by nobler emotions, Lord Byron proceeded to Coblentz, opposite to which city stands the castle of Ehrenbreristein, of which he says: "After having seen the fortifications of Gibraltar and Malta, it did not much strike by comparison; but the situation is commanding. General Marceau besieged it in vain for some time; and I slept in a room where I was shown a window, at which he is said to have been standing observing the progress of the siege by moon-light, when a ball struck immediately below it."

On this same General Marceau, who was slain near Coblentz, our English poet has bestowed an eulogium, merely because he was a republican hero who fell in asserting the rights of France, though it is now universally known that this man and his masters battled to take away the rights and liberties of all other people.

From Coblentz, Lord Byron proceeded up the Rhine as far as Basle, and thence to Clarens on the Lake of Geneva, by the way of Soleure and Morat. At this latter place, his lordship visited the pyramid

which the Swiss formed of the bones of the Burgundians, after the battle fought there, June 22, 1476. As that victory established the independence of the Swiss, they erected a chapel on the spot, and near it reared this extraordinary monument. "The former," says Lord Byron, "is destroyed, and the pyramid of bones diminished to a small number by the Burgundian legion in the service of France, who anxiously effaced this record of their ancestors' less successful invasions. A few still remain, notwithstanding the pains taken by the Burgundians for ages, all who passed that way removing a bone to their own country, and the less justifiable larcenies of the Swiss postillions, who carried them off to sell for knife-handles, a purpose for which the whiteness imbibed by the bleaching of years had rendered them in great request. Of these relics I ventured to bring away as much as may have made the quarter of a hero; for which the sole excuse is, that if I had not, the next passer-by might have perverted them to worse uses, than the careful preservation which I intend for them."

A taste like this, is not a subject for discussion:

but while it is easy to account for the conduct of a Burgundian from fellow-feeling, and of a Swiss from pride, it becomes difficult to see what interest an Englishman could take in the bones of soldiers who perished above three centuries ago; unless it is because, as history informs us, there happened to be several of his countrymen among the slain in the battle.

Clarens, where Lord Byron fixed his residence for some time, must be familiar to those who are acquainted with the writings of Rousseau; and it will no doubt acquire additional fame from having been the temporary resting-place of a genius equally original, capricious, and unsettled.

In one of the notes to his continuation of Childe Harold, the author speaks of his new abode and the surrounding objects with rapture: "In July 1816," says he, "I made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva, and, as far as my own observations have led me to, a not uninterested nor inattentive survey of all the scenes most celebrated by Rousseau in his Heloise, I can safely say, that in the description of Clarens,

there is no exaggeration. It would be difficult to see Clarens, with the scenes around it, Vevay, Chillon, Boveret, St. Gingo, Meillerie, Ersan, and the entrances of the Rhine, without being forcibly struck with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled. But this is not all; the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie, is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion: it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory; it is the great principle of the universe which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality and mingle in the beauty of the whole.

"If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shown his sense of their beauty by the selection: but they have done that for him, which no human being could do for them.

" I had the fortune, good or evil as it might be, to sail from Meillerie (where we landed for some time) to St. Gingo, during a lake storm, which added to the impression of all around, although occasionally accompanied by danger to the boat, which was small and overloaded. By a coincidence, which I did not regret, it was over this very part of the lake that Rousseau has driven the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar to Meillerie for shelter, during a tempest. On gaining the shore at St. Gingo, we found that the wind had been sufficiently strong to blow down some fine old chesnut-trees on the lower part of the mountains. On the height is a seat called the Chateau de Clarens. The hills are covered with vineyards, and interspersed with some small but beautiful woods: one of these was named the 'Bosquet de Julie;' and it is remarkable that though long ago cut down by the brutal selfishness of the monks of St. Bernard, to whom the land appertained, that the ground might be inclosed into a vineyard, for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition, the inhabitants of Clarens still point out the spot where its trees stood, calling it by the name which consecrated and survived them. Rousseau has not

been particularly fortunate in the preservation of the 'local habitations' he has given to 'airy nothings.' The prior of Great St. Bernard has cut down some of his woods for the sake of a few casks of wine, and Buonaparte has levelled part of the rocks of Meillerie in improving the road to Simplon. The road is an excellent one; but I cannot quite agree with a remark which I heard made, that 'La route vaut mieux que les souvenirs."

It will be seen from the reflections thrown out in this passage, that the author had imbibed the scepticism of Rousseau and Voltaire, to the fullest extent; so far, indeed, as to copy the shockingly offensive language of the French Infidel in speaking of the Christian religion; for it would be idle to suppose that by "execrable superstition," the noble author meant any thing else. Now after allowing all that can be advanced against monachism, it would be easy to prove that even such drones as the brothers of St. Bernard are here represented have done infinitely more good by their works of charity, than the whole fraternity of sceptical writers have effected or even intended by their productions. What hospitals for the relief of the

sick, what schools for the instruction of the ignorant, what asylums for the distressed, have the philosophical and poetical unbelievers ever established, or supported?

The monks of the convent of St. Bernard are bound by their order to the constant exercise of the virtue of hospitality; and all travellers without exception or solicitation are liberally entertained by this benevolent brotherhood, whose entire revenues are devoted to the work and labour of love. In the depth of winter, the monks are seen traversing the hills and valleys at the imminent risk of their lives, among the snow, in search of forlorn objects, for the purpose of relieving and conveying them to the monastery. Alpine mastiffs are also trained up to this service, and sent forth in couples at the seasons of greatest peril, to assist travellers who may be passing the mountain. The dogs are provided, one with a small keg of brandy attached to his collar, the other with a bundle of warm woollen cloth: thus accoutred, the animals hasten forth, exploring as they go every dangerous pass; and when they find a person overwhelmed in the snow, they exert themselves to the

utmost to extricate him from his dreadful situation. If they are at too great a distance from the convent to be heard, one of the dogs returns swiftly to give notice to the benevolent monks, whilst the other remains to administer comfort to the poor traveller. Nor is this all; for the fraternity, instead of being idle drones, are most active and heroically enterprising in braving all dangers for the relief of their fellow-creatures. The following is only one out of innumerable instances:—On the 28th of September, 1818, at five in the evening, a voice was heard at the monastery; and after a moment of surprise, a white speck was discovered, which seemed to be moving on an almost inaccessible rock. Upon this a monk hastened to the summit of the mountain, to the north of the hospital called the Point of Chenalletatz, and found on the brink of a precipice an Englishman, who, in attempting to reach the top, had taken the wrong direction, and made his way to the middle of a rock, from which he could neither ascend nor descend. The monk soon called for assistance to his brethren, who quickly climbed up with a lantern and ropes; but it was not till after dark that they reached the spot, and extricated the traveller from the imminent danger in which

he was placed. The rocks, the hardened snow, and the darkness, retarded their progress; so that it was very late when they arrived at the hospital. This circumstance is related on the authority of M. Pictet, the celebrated naturalist of Geneva, who saw the gentleman eight days afterwards, and heard from his own mouth the particulars of his escape; for which, next to Providence, he expressed his grateful obligations to the good fathers of St. Bernard.

Such are the men upon whom Lord Byron has poured the foulest abuse, for having improved their domain, by cutting down a grove which had been celebrated by that wretched maniac Rousseau. It is probable that neither the prior of St. Bernard, nor any of his brethren, ever read the "New Heloïse;" and they were certainly no losers by their ignorance of such a work, though it exhibits a very picturesque description of scenes with which they were familiar. But what these good men wanted in literary taste, was more than supplied by substantial virtue; and if they destroyed an unproductive wood, it was that they might raise wine, not to indulge in riot and debauchery, but to administer comfort to the wanderer,

the sick, and afflicted. At the period when the brethren of St. Bernard were thus calumniated, they kept a table every day for all travellers, who were entertained free of expense; and in two months alone there were furnished, thus gratuitously, no less than twelve thousand three hundred and twenty-four meals to passengers, by this nest of drones, as they have been most illiberally termed by Lord Byron, who, from his residence in their neighbourhood and visiting their house, well knew that to no set of men in the world could the epithet which he adopted be applied with so little propriety.

Perhaps the original possessors of his lordship's mansion in Nottinghamshire did not carry the virtue of hospitality quite so far as the monks of St. Bernard; but we know enough of the monastic history in general, to be satisfied that even the abbeys in England were nurseries of learning, and seats of charity. When they passed into the hands of hungry courtiers, the country in general was far from being benefited by the transfer; and the immediate neighbourhood of each of these religious foundations had reason enough to curse the exchange. Neither, if we were inclined to

carry on the historical enquiry to our own times, shall we find much to admire in the consequences that have resulted from this part of the Reformation; for, let the monkish superstition have been ever so despicable, it gave employment, instruction, and relief to the indigent; which is more than can be said of the state of things that followed, when the possessors of the abbey lands threw the maintenance of the poor upon the public, without compensating for that burthen, or the loss that had been otherwise sustained, either by local improvement, the influence of moral example, or the diffusion of knowledge.

Lord Byron is one of those noblemen who are indebted for all they enjoy to that spoliation of ecclesiastical property, which took place when it was deemed expedient to strengthen the power of the crown by sacrilege. It ill becomes such a man, therefore, to talk contemptuously of monastic foundations as the seats of idleness; when in fact the monks, by being resident and spending their revenues within their immediate vicinity, did incalculable good. The noble lord, on the contrary, like too many more who have been enriched in the same way, lives abroad, expends

the whole of his rental upon foreigners, and contributes nothing in return to the land that supports him, but publications tending to destroy all that can make society desirable, or life a blessing. There is something of ingratitude in this conduct; but infidelity is always spiteful; and, however much the tribe of sceptics may boast of their liberality of sentiment, they never show any courtesy to the opinions of others, even while they claim the utmost indulgence to their own sophisms. Of this want of common civility, a remarkable instance occurred during Lord Byron's abode in Switzerland. His lordship and two or three friends went to visit the priory of St. Bernard at Chamouny, and were entertained there with the customary hospitality of the fraternity. On going away, the album was presented us usual to the company, that each person might write his name therein, with such observation in prose or verse as might strike his fancy. One of these persons, Percy Bysshe Shelley, had the unparalleled audacity to write in Greek characters a blasphemous distich, to which he subscribed his name with the infamous epithet, Αθεος. As the monks are not learned, and perhaps seldom scrutinize their register minutely, this shocking outrage passed unno-

ticed, till some inquisitive traveller happened to detect and expose it. Yet Lord Byron continued to live on terms of intimacy with this person, after witnessing the atrocity which he committed; and he is actually associated with him at the present moment, in some new literary projects in Italy. How different from this unmanly conduct was that of the learned Sir Thomas Browne, who in his "Religio Medici" says, "I should violate my own arm rather than a church, nor willingly deface the name of saint or martyr. At the sight of a cross or a crucifix, I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour; I cannot laugh at, but rather pity the fruitless journeys of Pilgrims, or contemn the miserable condition of Friars; for though misplaced in circumstances, there is something in it of devotion."

The principal amusement of the noble wanderer during his residence in this romantic spot, was sailing on the Lake of Geneva, and sometimes he extended his aquatic excursions to other parts of Switzerland. In his manner of living, he is said to have been very reserved, and somewhat forbidding. Having invited

M. Pictet and M. Bonstetten one day to dinner, he went on the lake to Chillon, leaving a gentleman who travelled with him as a companion to do the honours of the table, and make the requisite apologies for his absence. Another time when engaged to an evening party at the house of a lady, he abruptly returned home on finding that the drawing-room was full of company. Many similar instances of capriciousness are related of his lordship in these parts, whence some persons might be inclined to suppose that the genius of the place had produced such an impression upon his mind, as to make him an imitator of Rousseau's wildest extravagancies.

Thus much is certain, that the stupendous scenery by which he was surrounded in every direction, had a wonderful effect upon his imagination; and of this the following extract from his note-book, giving an account of his visit to the Jungfraw, is a proof:—

"September 22, 1816.—Left Thunn in a boat, which carried us the length of the lake in three hours. The lake small, but the banks fine. Rocks down to the water's edge. Landed at Newhouse. Passed

Interlachen. Entered upon a range of scenes beyond all description or previous conception. Passed a rock bearing an inscription,—two brothers—one murdered the other—just the place for it. After a variety of windings came to an enormous rock—arrived at the foot of the mountain (the Jungfraw).—Glaciers—torrents—one of these nine hundred feet visible descent. Lodge at the curate's—set out to see the valley—heard an Avalanche fall like thunder! Glaciers enormous—storm came on—thunder and lightning and hail!—all in perfection and beautiful.—The torrent is in shape, curving over the rock, like the tail of the white horse streaming in the wind—just as it might be conceived would be that of the "Pale Horse," on which Death is mounted in the Apocalypse. It is neither mist nor water, but a something between both. Its immense height gives it a wave, a curve, a spreading here, a condensation there;—wonderful—indescribable.

"Sept. 23.—Ascent on the Wingren. The *Dent d'Argent*, shining, like Truth, on the one side; on the other, the clouds rose from the opposite valley, curling in perpendicular precipices, like the foam of

the ocean of hell during a spring-tide ! !—It was white and sulphury, and immeasurably deep in appearance. The side we ascended was of course not of so precipitous a nature; but on arriving at the summit, we looked down on the other side, upon a boiling sea of cloud, dashing against the crag on which we stood.

" Arrived at the Grindelwald; mounted and rode to the higher glacier—twilight—but distinct—very fine—glacier like a frozen hurricane—star-light, beautiful—the whole of the day was fine in point of weather, as the day in which Paradise was made. Passed whole woods of withered pines—all withered—trunks stripped and lifeless—done by a single winter !"

It is evident that these loose memoranda were thrown down warmly when the sublimities of which they are notices struck the mind of the writer most impressively: but the hints are therefore the more valuable on that account, as exhibiting the outlines of a panoramic picture, and the workings of a poetic genius in its first contemplation of some of the higher wonders of nature.

But though Lord Byron declared that the Lake of Geneva made him forget the troubled waters of the world; neither the Lethean efficacy of this pure stream, nor the mountainous palaces of nature, reflected therein as in a glassy mirror, could detain him from courting the charms of a softer climate. Within a few months he broke up the establishment which he had formed at Clarens, and, taking his course across the Alps, descended into the plains of the Milanese territory.

CHAPTER XIII.

Monody on Sheridan; Palpable Imitation of Aristo.—Poem of the Prisoner of Chillon.—Story of Bonnivard.—Publication of the Third Canto of Childe Harold.

SOON after the arrival of Lord Byron in Switzerland, he received from the managing committee of Drury-lane Theatre, a request to write for them a Monody on the late Mr. Sheridan. With this desire his lordship very readily complied; and his performance was recited to the audience at the opening of the season, on the 7th of September, 1816, immediately before the play of "The School for Scandal." In this eulogium the character of Sheridan, as an orator and a dramatic writer, is forcibly drawn, but not without a slight apologetic glance at his moral imperfections; upon which,

perhaps, it would have been the wiser course to have said nothing. The concluding part, in which the leading qualities of the deceased are brought into review, may here be quoted; though rather for the quaintness of the last thought, than on account of any extraordinary merit in the lines themselves:

> "While powers of mind almost of boundless range,
> Complete in kind—as various in their change;
> While Eloquence, Wit, Poesy and Mirth,
> That humbler harmonist of Care on earth
> Survive within our souls;—while lives our sense
> Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence;
> Long shall we seek his likeness—long in vain,
> And turn to all of him which may remain,
> Sighing that Nature form'd but one such man,
> And broke the die—in moulding SHERIDAN!"

Such is the extravagance of the last two lines, and their forced connexion, if they can be said to connect at all with the former part of the encomium, that we are rather disposed to be pleased than offended on learning the source from whence the conceit was derived. Lord Byron, however, must have been in a very dull humour, or not over-zealous in the work which he

undertook, when he had recourse to Ariosto for an illustration with which to wind up his panegyric. Yet so it is, that the whole of this fine compliment, in which one man, and he none of the best, is praised, at the expense of the species, is literally translated from the Italian romancer, whose words are, "Natura il fece, e poi ruppi la stampa."

No poet has availed himself more of the remarkable incidents and scenery which he has had the fortune to meet with in his travels than Lord Byron; and it is observable how the successive pieces published by him, take their imagery and characters from the localities by which the author was last surrounded. Few countries could afford a richer variety of matter for such a genius to work upon than Switzerland; and during his residence there he failed not to store his mind with an ample stock of original conceptions and combinations, drawn from the sublime and beautiful objects continually presented to his view.

It was here that he wrote, and caused to be published, his most pathetic poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon;" which, without any avowed or obvious

reason, he called a fable. The Chateau de Chillon, we are informed by the noble author, is situated between Clarens and Villeneuve; which last is one extremity of the Lake of Geneva. On its left are the entrances of the Rhone, and opposite are the heights of Meillerie, and the range of Alps above Bovinet and St. Gingo. Near it, on a hill behind, is a torrent; below it, and washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of eight hundred feet of French measure: within it is a range of dungeons, in which the early reformers, and subsequently prisoners of state, were confined. Across one of the vaults is a beam, black with age, on which, it is said, the condemned persons were executed. In the cells are seven pillars, or rather eight, one being half merged in the wall: on some of these are rings for the fetters and fettered, and in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces. Of this celebrated patriot, to whom Geneva is so much indebted for its independence, the following particulars are related.

Francis de Bonnivard, son of Louis de Bonnivard,

originally of Seyssel, and Lord of Lunes, was born in 1496. He studied at Turin; and in 1510, John Ame de Bonnivard, his uncle, resigned to him the priory of St. Victor, near Geneva. When the Reformation began, and set thinking men upon enquiry, Bonnivard became the great advocate of liberty, and sacrificed every thing for the establishment of it at Geneva, of which republic he wrote the history. In 1519, the Duke of Savoy having entered the Genevan territory, Bonnivard retired to Friburg; but he was betrayed by two men who accompanied him, and the prince sent him to prison, where he remained two years. This, however, did not abate his zeal; and in 1530 he fell again into the hands of the Duke of Savoy, who confined him in the castle of Chillon, where he continued till 1536, when he was released by the Bernese. He had now the pleasure of seeing Geneva free and reformed; after which he spent the remainder of his days in peace, and died full of age and honour in 1570. Such is the story of Bonnivard, in honour of whom Lord Byron wrote this sonnet, prefixed to the poem of the prisoner of Chillon:

"Eternal Spirit of the chainless mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom—
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard!—may none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God."

Yet the history of Bonnivard, highly interesting as it might have been made, forms no part of the poem which the genius of Lord Byron produced upon the gloomy citadel where that illustrious man was so long imprisoned. The narrative, however, which is uncommonly well imagined, and most affectingly told, pourtrays just such an event as may well be supposed to have happened in those turbulent days, when Bonnivard and his compatriots succeeded in breaking the yoke of tyranny.

The seven pillars in the dungeon of Chillon, appear to have suggested the idea to Lord Byron, of a family consisting of that number of persons, who became the victims of persecution. Of these the single survivor is supposed to relate the history; but it commences so abruptly, as to make it difficult to guess whether it be a soliloquy, or an address to another person in answer to his enquiry. Notwithstanding this defect, which is a very common one with the narratory poems of the noble author, the piece operates strongly upon the mind of the reader as he proceeds with the story; in which the sufferer paints the dreadful calamities of his house with that pathos of woe and minuteness of feeling, which might be expected in one who endured such an accumulation of misery. The father and one son are represented as martyred at the stake, for the Protestant faith; two other sons fall in the field of battle, fighting for the liberties of their country; and the three survivors are incarcerated in the dungeon of Chillon, where each is fastened to a pillar, without having the power to hold any communion with one another, except by the voice of lamentation. In this dismal place, and under these distressing circum-

stances, two of the brothers fall a prey to disease produced by grief; and it is in the description of their sufferings, and of his own agonizing feelings when beholding them without having had the power to administer relief, that the narrator is made to excite the powerful emotions of sympathy. Yet this is effected in a very artless manner, and the tale is told with all that simplicity which is best adapted to work its way directly to the heart. The death of the youngest of this persecuted family, is most affectingly described; and nothing can be more touching than the awful care which the survivor is represented as observing, after having obtained the liberty of walking about his cell, to avoid passing over the graves of his brethren. Another stroke of sensibility in this exquisitely pathetic piece, is the visit of the little bird at the window of the cell, the prisoner's emotions on losing it, and the fancy which darted itself into his mind, that this was the soul of his younger brother under that appearance. Beautiful as these strokes are, there is yet another of equal, if not superior, excellence in the description of the captive climbing up to catch an occasional glimpse of the lake and the distant mountains, with the effect which these slight glances produce upon his mind.

Upon the whole, the "Prisoner of Chillon" may safely be pronounced the purest of Lord Byron's performances, though it may not come up to many or most of the others in richness of imagery, and loftiness of sentiment. If one thing is wanting in the poem, to render it as perfect as could be wished, the deficiency is easily accounted for; since the efficacy of that faith from which a sufferer for his religion may be supposed to have derived support, could only be painted by one who had felt the influence of the same principle.

How incompetent the noble author was to express the power of religious feeling, in fortifying the mind under captivity, and in the face of death, will appear from the sonnet which he wrote in praise of four sceptics, about the same time that he composed this poem on the suffering virtues of the Protestant martyrs:

"Rousseau—Voltaire—our Gibbon—and De Stael—
Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore;
Thy shore, of names like these, wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely, as to all;

But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall,
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous;—but by thee,
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!"

These "Heirs of Immortality," some, perhaps, without being guilty of bigotry, may be disposed to rank with the worthies of whom our great ethical poet speaks as being "doomed to everlasting fame." Notoriety was their object, and they gained it by poisoning the stream of truth, as far as lay in their power, for the base purpose of corrupting public morals. Rousseau told Hume that he aimed in his writings to excite wonder by marvellous representations of life and manners. Voltaire endeavoured to destroy religion, because he was afraid of it. The same may be observed of our Gibbon, who thought of nothing but himself; and, however splendid his great work may be, it is a monument of personal vanity; in which pride and malice are equally predo-

minant. Of the lady who brings up the rear, the least that can be said is, that no moral man would wish to have a wife or daughter of her character, even though endowed with the advantages of the knowledge and genius which she possessed.

But among the literary pursuits of Lord Byron while in Switzerland, his third Canto of Childe Harold may be said to possess the strongest claims to notice, on account of its importance as the continuation of an original design, and for the peculiarities by which it is distinguished.

This part opens with an address to the author's daughter, but evidently not so much from the principle of paternal affection for the child, as from the wish to shine in the poetic expression of tenderness; for, let what will be thought of the feelings of the noble lord, there was certainly a want of consistency in dedicating a poem to an infant of whom he had taken so little care.

The manner in which this curious inscription begins has an air of affectation, that must disgust

every sensible mind on taking into consideration the circumstances under which it was written, the abruptness of his lordship's departure from England, and the wandering course of life adopted by him, when he had so fond a tie to call for his personal attention at home. Instead of discharging those imperative obligations which belong to the paternal relation, the noble author contents himself with apostrophizing his daughter in print, and that in a strain which would seem to preclude all prospect of a reunion:

> "Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child?
> ADA, sole daughter of my house and heart!
> When last I saw thy young blue eyes, they smiled—
> And then we parted—not as now we part—
> But with a hope."

With the private feelings of any man, or the concerns of his family, the public have nothing to do—unless those feelings and concerns are mixed up with his writings, and obtruded on the world by himself; in which case they become proper matter for discussion. Lord Byron, when he left his native land, should have

buried his domestic differences in the privacy of his own mind; for if he did not choose to explicate the causes of them, he had no right, in any way, or at any time, to endeavour by his appeals to excite that sympathy which could not be felt towards him without prejudice to others. But as he begins, so he ends this song with dwelling upon the affectionate solicitude which, according to his representation, occupied his thoughts for the child whom he had left behind; when he might, and ought, if he was really an injured man, to have taken that child under his own proper protection. Nor should it be forgotten that the man who has the moral welfare of his offspring at heart, will be sedulously circumspect of his own character and conduct; knowing how much the peace and reputation of a family depend upon the principles and deportment of a father. Lord Byron has an only daughter, the heiress of his house, name, and fortunes: now let the world judge of the tender regard which the noble poet has had to the future comforts of this daughter. Has that regard been manifested by invectives against marriage, by tales of debauchery, by a daring mockery of all religion, and by an open apology for offences which ought not to be named? Such, however, is the lite-

rary estate which this right honourable author will leave to his posterity; and in this manner has he discharged the duties of life, though blessed with an inheritance and a genius that enabled him to have secured for his descendants the proud and grateful remembrance of talent consecrated to virtue. Yet in this poem Lord Byron anticipates the enjoyment of a blessing to which he certainly can have no claim, unless a great moral change is effected, of which as yet the world has seen no symptoms. In his concluding lines to his infant daughter he says—

"Though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me: though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation—and a broken claim;—
Though the grave closed between us—'twere the same—
I know that thou wilt love me: though to drain
My blood from out thy being, were an aim,
And an attainment,—all would be in vain;
Still thou wouldst love me—still that more than life retain."

Thus begins and thus ends the third canto of Childe Harold, in which the noble author has so completely pourtrayed himself that it would be ridi-

culous to separate the pilgrim from the poet, however disagreeable the junction may appear.

The travels of Lord Byron from England to the Lake of Geneva constitute the materials of the poem; and he has sketched the scenery which occurred to his view as he passed along the Rhine with a rapid but accurate pencil. Still there is throughout this part much more of metaphysical abstraction and gloomy reflection than of glowing description or varied imagery, until we are brought to the vicinity of the Alps; and here the author is in his element. These mighty hills are—

> 'The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
> Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
> And throned Eternity in icy halls,
> Of cold sublimity where forms and falls
> The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
> All that expands the spirit, yet appals
> Gather around these summits, as to show
> How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below!"

An Alpine tempest is pictured with a power which nothing short of personal observation could have

enabled any one to describe accurately, and which none but a mind enthusiastically poetical could have painted so forcibly. As a contrast to this grand and terrible exhibition, we turn to the mild and gentle lake, at the close of day:

" It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear;
Mellowing and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more."

But though the mind of the author could harmonize so well with inanimate nature, he was at complete war with the moral world: for thus he soliloquizes—

" I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities, torture. I can see

Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desart past
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast—
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling."

He who could bring himself to think and judge so uncharitably of the whole mass of mankind, had no reason to complain of severity. But after all, what in reality had this noble person to be dissatisfied with in the moral constitution of the universe? Of the good things of this life he possessed a superabundance; certainly far more than ever before fell to the lot of a poet; and if literary fame was the object of his ambition, he had even at this period attained a much

higher rank, and more extensive celebrity, than his most ardent expectation could have augured when he first offered himself as a candidate for literary distinction. He was now become a planet in the poetic system, surrounded with his belts and luminous ring; attended also by an increasing number of satellites, and even acquiring new honours and admirers every day. Yet with all these advantages, and having little or no apparent cause for discontent, the noble lord never appeared before the public without inveighing bitterly against the whole construction of human society, and bewailing in the most piteous terms his own hard lot, in being obliged to associate with mountains, oceans, and deserts. To use his own phraseology in this third Canto of Childe Harold, his mind, "proud in desolation, refused to yield up its dominion to the spirits against whom he rebelled."

But who called upon him to deliver up his mind to thraldom? or what attempt was ever made to bind down this unfettered spirit from exercising its intellectual privileges to a boundless extent? If this querulous language has any meaning at all, and some it must have, the rational interpretation of it can only

be this; that the forms and laws of civil life were by him considered as too strict for conformity.

His strange comparison of the appearance of the Alpine clouds, when tossed and tumbling in restless confusion, to the "ocean of hell during a spring tide," is not an inapt figure of his own perturbed state of mind, when he threw out so many denunciations against mankind. After this, the quiet and humble spirit who seeks happiness with the desire of communicating it to others, as far as he has it in his power, will not be disposed to regard these views of life, whatever may be thought of their high poetical colouring, as entitled to credit, or the author to respect. In truth, the metaphysical lucubrations of Lord Byron display every where such bursts of ungovernable passion, and are so totally void of any thing like the correct observation of existing things, or a philosophical discrimination of them, that no one can read his ravings without pain, though they were evidently intended to command assent and to raise pity. The coruscations of a mighty genius, indeed, shoot forth like the glare of lightning amidst these wild and tumultuary ebullitions; but the light so thrown out only serves to expose a

chaos of boiling thoughts, and indigested conceptions, working together in endless confusion, and rendered worse by a proud contempt of all order and authority.

To the arbitrary decisions of a mind so disturbed in itself, what sober understanding can be disposed to pay attention on questions that require patient investigation and an impartial judgment? Yet the noble author of Childe Harold, in this third Canto, while professing enmity to his own kind, and affinity only with lakes and rocks, presumes to enter into the affairs of nations, and to pass sentence upon the counsels of empires.

In addition to this political excrescence, is another deformity of a still fouler description; and that is the bold avowal of infidelity, with an eulogy upon the great champions of Scepticism. Of Voltaire, who is evidently a favourite of the noble lord, it is said that he was

"Most unstable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various—gay, grave, sage, or wild,—
Historian, bard, philosopher combined:
He multiplied himself among mankind,

The Proteus of their talents; but his own
Breathed most in ridicule—which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne."

To render this encomiastic description more characteristic of the object, and more offensive to good manners, the noble lord has here applied one of the sublimest figures in the gospel, to the man who spent his whole life in endeavouring to root out the principles of all religion from the minds of men. In the same spirit Gibbon the historian partakes of the author's praises, for having "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer;" and it is for this also that Lord Byron puts in his own claim to immortality, though, while boasting of his mental independence, he makes the dreadful confession that he knew not how to direct his steps aright; for which, however, he assigns this cogent reason,

"Untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned."

CHAPTER XIV.

Marloe and Lord Byron compared.—Account of the dramatic Poem of "Manfred."—Origin and tendency of that Piece.—Ferrara.—The "Lament of Tasso."

WERE we disposed to select a parallel to Lord Byron from among our old English writers, we know not one so exactly suited in all points to our purpose, as Christopher Marloe, the contemporary of Shakspeare; and who is thus characterised by Michael Drayton:

"Next Marloe, bathed in Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That your first poets had; his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear:
For that fine madness still he did retain
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

To the most daring scepticism and licentiousness of principles, were added in him a fertile genius and great originality of conception; but he delighted in drawing characters which, for the honour of human nature, it is to be hoped had rarely if ever any prototypes; and though Marloe was himself a professed unbeliever to the widest extent, he encumbered his pieces with all the dreadful machinery of superstitious credulity. But his main power lay in representing villany; and in doing this, no one ever exceeded him; for all the personages of his dramas, upon whom he has heaped the load of guilt, are criminal without any motive except that of vice, and this deadly innate obliquity of mind they retain without compunction or repentance to the last moment of existence. It is, therefore, not to be wondered that the works of Marloe should have long since sunk into oblivion; for where no moral end is answered by such representations, the effect must be mischievous. The reproach which Æschylus, according to Aristophanes, brings against Euripides, is that he exhibited the vilest characters in his pieces. "What," said the great tragedian, "am I the inventor of those personages?"—"No," answers Æschylus, "their ad-

ventures were known long before; but a poet, whose business it is to instruct mankind, ought not to choose for his subjects, historical adventures the recital of which may have a pernicious influence."

But if this be wrong in regard to the exhibition of real events, and the delineation of characters that have actually lived in the world; how much more improper is it to imagine new scenes of iniquity, and to bring before the public, either on the stage, or in print, creatures whose sole pleasure is wickedness? Such, however, are the dramatic personages of Marloe, and such are the prominent ones in the poems of Lord Byron. After carrying the idea of human depravity to a depth of degradation as far as imagination seemed capable of going, the noble author resolved to make another effort, and to embody a being that should outdo all his former doings. It is curious that he should have been tempted to this strange trial of his creative powers, by the sublime scenery which excited his astonishment among the icy mountains of Switzerland; and that the contemplation of objects calculated to raise the mind to noble thoughts, should have inspired him with the notion of forming a hideous

moral contrast to those wonders. Such, however, is the fact; and it was the Jungfraw, of which he sketched so fine an outline, that suggested to him the idea of pourtraying a character no less gigantic in wickedness, than that mountain appeared terrible in the awful magnificence of nature. This may be poetical, but it is not consistent, and such a manner of studying the grand appearances of the external world, differs in sentiment and utility from that mentioned by our immortal dramatic writer, who could

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and *good* in every thing."

The poem of "Manfred," though called a drama, has nothing more of that species of composition, than what arises from the circumstance of its being divided into acts and scenes, with machinery drawn from mythology, and the chimeras of magical superstition. The piece opens with the appearance of Manfred soliloquizing, at midnight, in his Gothic gallery, upon the wretchedness of his situation, though the particulars and causes of his misery are left to be conjectured. After a long preamble, he ven-

tures to call to his aid the ministers of darkness; who, being disobedient to the first summons, are invocated by a more potent spell, the like of which will not easily be found in any of the demonologists from Jamblichus down to Cornelius Agrippa:

> "By a power
> Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant spell
> Which had its birth-place in a star condemn'd,
> The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
> A wandering hell in the eternal space;
> By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
> The thought which is within me and around me,
> I do compel ye to my will."

There was no standing against this terrible conjuration, and accordingly forth issue the trembling inhabitants of the deep, "black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey," anxious to know the wish of the necromancer. Manfred, in reply, demands the boon of "forgetfulness of that which is within him." This, however, is more than they have the power of granting; on which the enchanter commands them to assume the human form, and accordingly one of them takes the appearance of his deceased sister, with

whom he had committed a crime too horrible to be stated. This phantom overpowers the faculties of Manfred, and terminates the first scene. In the next, he appears on the edge of one of the precipices of the Jungfraw, ready to throw himself into the chasm below, when he is snatched from destruction by a hunter, who conveys him to his cottage. The second act presents Manfred wandering by a cataract, where he invokes the witch of the Alps, who comes at his call; and the following colloquy takes place:—

Witch.—Proceed.

Man.—Oh! I but thus prolong'd my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief—
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seem'd not such to me—
Yet there was one—

Witch.—Spare not thyself—proceed.

Man.—She was like me in lineaments—her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said, were like to mine;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty:
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,

The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe; nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine—
Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not;
And tenderness—but that I had for her:
Humility—and that I never had.
Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own:—
I loved her and destroyed her!

Witch.—With thy hand?

Man.—Not with my hand, but heart—which broke her heart;—

It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed
Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed;—
I saw—and could not staunch it.

Witch.—And for this—
A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrinkest back
To recreant mortality.—Away!

Man.—Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour—
But words are breath—look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings—come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the furies:—I have gnash'd
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sun-set:—I have pray'd
For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.

I have affronted Death— ut in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things pass'd harmless—the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless dæmon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break."

After some more confessions of the same fearful description, Manfred being left alone by the witch, proceeds to his incantations, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is any existence after death. Then follows a meeting of the Destinies, with Nemesis at their head, in the Hall of Arimanes, on the summit of a mountain. In this part the author gives a specimen of his politics and liberal sentiments, in the following account which Nemesis gives of herself and her late occupations:

"I was detain'd repairing shatter'd thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties;
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh; for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of Freedom the forbidden fruit."

Into the hall where these personages are assembled, Manfred presumes to enter, and, after some entreaty, prevails upon the Destinies to call up his sister Astarte from the dead. This is done, and the apparition having informed him, that "to-morrow ends his earthly ills," vanishes. In the last act, an Abbot is introduced, for the purpose, as it should seem, of manifesting the author's contempt of religion; for there is neither dignity in the priest, nor penitence in Manfred. The following scene is an awkward and ludicrous travesty of the story of Saul and the witch of Endor:

"*Man.*—Look there, I say,
And stedfastly;—now tell me what thou seest.
Abbot.—That which should shake me—but I fear it not:—
I see a dusk and awful figure rise
Like an infernal God from out the earth,
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds; he stands between
Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.
Man.—Thou hast no cause—he shall not harm thee—but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.
I say to thee—Retire!

Abbot.—And I reply—
Never—till I have talk'd with this fiend—
What doth he here?
Man.—Why—ay—what doth he here?
I did not send for him—he is unbidden.
Abbot.—Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! he unveils his aspect; on his brow
The thunder scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell.—
Avaunt!"

Satan, however, is not so easily scared; and though Manfred, like Doctor Faustus, in Marloe's play, strives hard to void his doom, a legion of spirits arise to enforce obedience. The dying scene, and the reflection of the Abbot, will remind the reader of Shakspeare's inimitable description of the death-bed of Cardinal Beaufort.

Such is the story of Manfred, than which a worse could not well have been conceived by any imagination; but for what purpose a character so unique in wickedness and absurdity was formed, we are not told. Setting aside this deformity, and the incongruities with

which it is connected, there are many fine passages in the poem ; but they lose the effect which would otherwise have been produced by them, from their being intermixed with disgusting scenes and extravagant reflections. One of the finest descriptions in the piece, is the following soliloquy of Manfred :

" The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man ; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth
When I was wandering—upon such a night--
I stood within the Colisæum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome :
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin : from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber ; and
More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
The owl's long cry ; and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels—the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach

Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bow shot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths—
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth:
But the gladiator's bloody circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection;
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay."

There is great beauty in this description, but it is sadly marred by dislocated sentences, prosaic diction and gross solecisms of language; faults which not only disfigure the present poem, but run through all the works of the noble author. These defects, however, are but as a feather in the balance, compared with the black immorality of the piece. Yet it has been said of the hero of the poem, that his character is marked by independent dignity, intellectual power, and intrepid philosophy; though his dignity consisted in unrepented guilt under the remembrance of the foulest of crimes, and his mental superiority lay in the belief of sorcery, and in the practice of the drivelling superstitions of the dark ages.

The next production of the noble lord was of a healthier complexion; so much so as almost to make the reader believe, that the genial climate to which he had now removed had wrought a happy effect upon his mind. In passing through Ferrara, Lord Byron was induced to visit the Lunatic Hospital of St. Anne, where Tasso was confined some years, for his presumption in aspiring to the love of the Princess Leonora of Este. Of the insanity of the Italian poet, there can be little doubt; and yet his case was of a description to excite the sympathy of every mind of sensibility. Lord Byron, in this poem, has personified the suffering bard, and expressed in strong language the sentiments which Tasso may be supposed to have felt during his long confinement.

There is, however, one passage in this short but fine poem, which savours more of the noble author's own style of thinking than that of the great poet in whose name he professes to pour out the strain of lamentation. It is where Tasso is made to justify his ambitious love:

"It is no marvel—from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers
Whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours."

Now this is so far from being in character, that it is the very reverse; for whether Tasso was in his senses or not, if his love was sincere, he would have made the object of his affection the sole theme of his meditation, instead of generalizing his passion, and talking about the original sympathies of his nature. Lord Byron, we know, is fond of this kind of boasting, and of declaring how powerfully his mind has ever been attracted to the beauties of the universe; but a man over head and ears in love, would make use of other language, and direct all his thoughts to the single being in whom his soul centered.

Still the "Lament of Tasso" is a beautiful piece, notwithstanding the negligence of the composition;

and it would be difficult perhaps to find a better piece of painting, than this description of the Mad-House:

" Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry,
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy soul,
Some who do still goad on the o'er-labour'd mind,
And dim the little light that's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill:
With these and with their victims am I class'd,
Mid sounds and sights like these long years have pass'd;
Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close:
So let it be—for then I shall repose."

This picture, though enfeebled by unnecessary expletives, is finely touched, and had the noble author never written any thing else, the monument here erected by him to the honour of Tasso, would have entitled him to the praise of being a poet of the first order.

CHAPTER XV.

Rome.—Completion of "Childe Harold."—Fall of Venice.—An Italian Landscape by Moonlight.—Statue of Venus.—Conclusion of the Poem.—Deformities.—Poetical Tale of "Beppo."—Allusion to Peter Pindar and Whistlecraft.—A Literary imposition practised on Lord Byron, in the Story of the "Vampyre."—Publication of "Mazeppa."

AFTER visiting various parts of the North of Italy, Lord Byron took up his abode for some time at Venice, where he was joined by his old acquaintance Mr. Hobhouse, with whom he went on an excursion to Rome; and there the poem of Childe Harold received its completion. The longest and last Canto of this very irregular piece was published at the beginning of 1818, with a complimentary address to the

author's fellow traveller, who, besides contributing to the volume a copious body of notes, printed also, in a separate form, a miscellany, entituled "Illustrations of Childe Harold."

The poem opens at Venice, which city is described as seen from the "Bridge of Sighs," and rising like a new Cybele from the ocean. The fallen fortunes of this once famed republic are lamented in strong terms, and with many severe reflections upon England, for neglecting to protect the most tyrannical of all oligarchies, and which for many years had given indications of irremediable and merited dissolution. From Venice we are conducted to Arqua, where Petrarch lies; thence to Ferrara; and finally, by the course of the Arno, to the ancient capital of the world. In this circuit various interesting objects are described, and some spirited sketches introduced of eminent Italian writers, among whom are Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Boccacio, and Alfieri. Of the picturesque representations, the moonlight scene near Venice is one of the most beautiful; and the description of a cataract on the Velino, one of the

grandest in the poem. The former as exhibiting the soft features of an Italian sky and landscape, may be considered as a poetical Claude:

" The Moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her:—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains: heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be
Melted to one vast Iris of the west,
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest!
A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhœtian hill,
As day and night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows.
Fill'd with the face of heaven, which from afar
Comes down upon the waters, all its hues
From the rich sunset to the rising star
Their magical variety diffuse;

And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies, and like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, 'till—'tis gone—and all is grey."

There are some sad prosaic lines and uncouth terminations in this passage; but the worst drawback from unqualified praise lies against a ludicrous instance of the bathos, in which the mellowing shades of a delightful evening sky are compared to the changes of colour in a dying fish.

Such excrescencies are, however, too thickly strewn throughout the poem; and what is very extraordinary, we meet with them most in those parts where it was natural to expect the greatest correctness and the highest polish. Thus, in the apostrophe to Venus, occasioned by a contemplation of her statue, nothing can be conceived more incongruous, limping, and absurd, than the following lines:

"Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War?

And gazing on thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn
Shower'd on his eye-lids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!"

This simile of volcanic kisses, showered from an urn, if any idea can be formed of such endearments, would have made Longinus swear, even though he had found the figure in Homer.

The address to Rome is of a different character, and the description of the Collisæum, with the story of the gladiator, will make the reader forget, for a moment, the blemishes which elsewhere disjoint the verse and spoil the sense.

We pass over the flaming spirit with which the author raves upon his mighty wrongs, and prophesies bitter things against the "souls of those whom he surveys in his imagination." His imprecations are indeed deep and dreadful, but we turn from them to a feeling more sentimental and poetic:

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar;
I love not man the less, but Nature more.
From these our interviews, in which I steal,
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal."

Little as the supposed pilgrim appears in this part, any more than in the preceding one, he is introduced at the conclusion, for the purpose of taking his final leave of the reader, in an epilogue, the last stanza of which is as follows:

"Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye who have traced the pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore the sandal-shoon and scallop shell.
Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with you the moral of the strain."

Unhappily, however, there is no moral at all in

the piece, if by the word be meant any direct object, or implied design, under the form of a narrative. The poem in truth exhibits nothing more than sketches of scenery, and metaphysical considerations, neither connected with, nor bearing any necessary relation to each other; or tending, as far as can be discerned, to the elucidation of any one moral truth.

In regard to poetical conception, the piece throughout carries decided proofs of a most fertile and exuberant fancy; but it is a fancy unchastised by judgment; hence every Canto, and none more so than the last, abounds with the grossest errors in language, violations of prosody, and miserable rhymes; of which the following curious instance occurs in an address to the Ocean, on the destruction of a poor sailor, who has

> "His petty hope in some near port or bay,
> And dashest him again to earth—there let him lay."

While the noble author of Childe Harold was putting the last hand to that poem, he produced another of a widely different character, both in sub-

ject and versification, entituled "Beppo; a Venetian Story." The tale is of the humorous cast, and of a very slight texture, being nothing more than the adventure of a Venetian mariner named Giuseppe, or by diminution Beppo, who remains abroad so long, that his wife Laura takes what the poet calls a "vice-husband" to protect her. In the midst of the Carnival, however, the amusements of which are admirably described, Beppo, who had been a slave and a pirate, makes his appearance, reclaims his lady, and all the parties continue to live together very harmoniously. Flimsy, as the materials are, the manner in which the noble author has wrought them up, is very pleasant; and shows an uncommon sportiveness of disposition, tending somewhat strongly to the causticity of satire; with such a command of language, that it may absolutely be said to dance under the gaiety of fancy. The happiest specimen of this jeu d'esprit of verse, is the introductory picture of the Carnival:

"The moment Night with dusky mantle covers
The skies, (and the more duskily the better),
The time less liked by husbands than by lovers
Begins, and prudery flings aside her fetter:

And Gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the gallants who beset her;
And there are songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

"And there are dresses, splendid, but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-Doodles, and Hindoos.
All kinds of dress except the ecclesiastical,
All people as their fancies hit may choose;
But no one in these parts may quiz the clergy,
Therefore, take heed, ye Freethinkers, I charge ye:

"You 'd better walk about begirt with briars
Instead of coat and small-clothes, than put on
A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
Altho' you swore it only was in fun.
They 'd haul you o'er the coals and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the cauldron's bubble
That boil'd your bones, unless you paid them double."

This poem will naturally remind the reader of the humorous productions of the facetious Wolcot, better known by the assumed appellation of Peter Pindar; but if we are not mistaken, there is more flexibility in

the versification of the noble satirist, who is equal to Butler in the invention of compound words and the whimsicality of double rhymes; of which the following description of the Tuscan dialect may serve as an instance:

> "I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
> Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
> And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
> With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
> And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
> That not a single accent seems uncouth,
> Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
> Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all."

Though it seems probable that the noble author had the merry tales of Peter Pindar in his mind, when he sketched this burlesque story; it should be observed that some months previous to the appearance of Beppo, the town was amused and puzzled by a strange piece, bearing the title of "A Prospectus and Specimen of an intended national work by William and Robert Whistlecraft, of Stow Market, in Suffolk, Harness and Collar Makers. Intended to comprize

the most interesting particulars relating to King Arthur and his Round Table."

This singular performance, which was evidently intended to ridicule the poetical romances of the Poet Laureat, is constructed exactly in the same measure as Beppo, and exhibits an equal portion of dry humour and fluency of language; so that if the parentage be not the same, the likeness is strong enough to deceive the keenest observers, as the following stanza will evince:

"True courage bears about a charm or spell—
It looks, I think, like an instinctive law,
By which superior nations daunt and quell
Frenchmen and foreigners with fear and awe.
I wonder if philosophers can tell—
Can they explain the thing, with all their jaw?
I can't explain it—but the fact is so,
A fact which every midshipman must know."

As the celebrity attached to the name of Lord Byron now made the public anxious for every thing that came from his pen, some persons in London,

for the sake of a little temporary profit, contrived to get up, in his name, a tale in prose, with the title of "The Vampyre." This performance had all the success that the parties concerned in the fabrication could well hope for; since, owing to the absence of the noble lord, there was little probability of the appearance of a formal exposure of the fraud, till the whole impression should have been sold. The publisher of his lordship's works, however, ventured to assert in print that it was an imposture; and then a person, who had attended the noble lord abroad in a medical capacity, had the temerity to affirm that though the developement of the story was his own, the ground-work was certainly Lord Byron's, having been related by him in company during his residence on the Lake of Geneva. Whatever truth there might be in this, it furnished no excuse for the publication of the piece, in the name of the noble lord, without consulting him upon the subject. Had he even been the actual writer, instead of the mere relater of this marvellous story, no man of any moral principles would have presumed to send such an article into the world, until he had obtained full

authority for the publication. But in reality the whole was a mere speculation, contrived by some needy adventurers, two or three of whom pretended to have lived on terms of the closest intimacy and correspondence with the noble lord; whose disavowal of them, and their spurious bantling, they well knew could not possibly arrive in time to prevent them from reaping the first fruits of their unprincipled deception. It is not a little remarkable that one of these persons, after having been a servile adulator of Lord Byron, should since have become his most inveterate enemy, by endeavouring, as far as lay in his power, to undermine his literary reputation. The right honourable poet, however, has not much reason to complain of such treatment, considering how inconsistent he has himself been in his enmities and partialities. Having also taken up an evil opinion of mankind, it is no more to be wondered that he should have selected the designing and the worthless for his companions, than that they should deceive him, and take a foul advantage of his credulity. On the proper choice of friends depends much of the happiness of life; he, therefore, who is careless in

this respect, and takes a pleasure in the fulsome incense of hungry parasites, may thank his own vanity for the ingratitude and treachery which he will most assuredly experience.

Though Lord Byron was thus made to suffer the usual effects of popularity, he did not on that account secede from the service of the Muses, or withhold his productions from the public eye. At the time when the crafty were endeavouring to avail themselves of the distinction of his name, he brought out another poem, of a new description, and written in a style very different from any of his preceding performances. This narrative entitled "Mazeppa," is the story of that celebrated chief of the Cossacks mentioned by Voltaire, and others who have written the life of Charles XII. of Sweden. The night after the fatal battle of Pultowa, Mazeppa, while the king and his attendants are resting beneath a tree, relates his adventures; which simply consist of his amour with a Polish Countess, and his detection by the husband, who orders him to be fastened to a wild horse and turned loose upon the desert. The sufferings which Mazeppa endures in this dreadful journey, through

forest and flood, over hill and dale, are powerfully described; and when the animal at last falls with his rider, who is unable to disengage himself, the mind feels as it were a chill of horror at this dreadful linking of the living and the dead. While Mazeppa lies beneath the horse, he sees a raven hovering round, which he scares away by a feeble cry and motion of his hand. This very natural incident heightens the spirit of the picture; which is in every part complete, and terminates by the release of the sufferer from his perilous state, through the humanity of some Cossacks, who remove him to their cottage; after which he rises to be a chief among these people, and takes dreadful vengeance upon his persecutor. This act of retribution he dwells upon with much satisfaction in his relation, and says,

"They little thought that day of pain
When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash;
That one day I should come again,
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourteous ride.
They play'd me then a bitter prank,
When, with the wild horse for my guide,

They bound me to his foaming flank:
At length I play'd them one as frank;—
For time, at last, sets all things even;
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

The imagery of the poem is of the richest and most appropriate character; but the same praise cannot be justly given to the construction of the verse, which in numerous instances is incorrect and feeble, obsolete and affected. The rhymes also are frequently harsh and defective, as thus:

"And many a time ye there might pass,
Nor dream that e'er that fortress was;
I saw its turrets in a blaze."

With the story of Mazeppa, the noble author published an "Ode to Venice," written in a strain of lamentation for the loss of its liberty by despots,—

as the combined states are denominated, though Lord Byron must have known that the independence of that republic had been completely destroyed by Buonaparte, long antecedent to the annihilation of his own colossal power.

CHAPTER XVI.

Observation on Italy by Ascham.—Its application to Lord Byron.—Degradation of his Poetic Genius—Instanced in "Don Juan."—That character a counterpart of Childe Harold.—Family Sketches.—Outline of the Story.—Its gross immoralities and profanity.

THE learned Roger Ascham, who was Queen Elizabeth's tutor, says, that "though he was only nine days at Venice, he saw in that little time more liberty to sin, than ever he heard tell of in the city of London in nine years." This made him inveigh sharply against the practice of sending young gentlemen to complete their education in Italy, from whence, observes he, "they return common contemners of marriage; not because they love virginity, nor yet because they hate pretty young virgins, but

having been there free to go whithersoever lust will carry them, they do not like that law and honesty should be such a bar to their liberty at home in England."

What other changes the lapse of above two centuries may have produced in that country of blue lakes and perpetual sun-shine, it would be tedious to examine; but there is some reason to fear that they who go thither for the benefit of the climate, or the contemplation of its scenery, neither bring away a substantial addition to their stock of knowledge, nor any valuable improvement in their morals. That a long residence in that land of soft enchantment has an injurious effect upon the mental faculties, seems remarkably exemplified in the case of Lord Byron; whose poetic genius if it has not been altogether enfeebled by Italianized manners, has neither acquired new vigour, nor gained an access of lustre in what honest Ascham calls "Circe's Court." Though posssesed of that high and commanding faculty which is capable of "building the lofty rhyme," the noble lord appears to have lost the ambition of achieving an object worthy of his name and calculated

to ensure immortality. Instead of raising his thoughts to some great argument, and endeavouring to secure that honourable place in the temple of fame, the attainment of which few of his contemporaries could with equal reason at one period have anticipated, he seems to have formed the resolution of taking a downward course, and of obtaining distinction by the degradation of his intellectual powers.

In the apology which he published for sketching the character of Childe Harold, he stated that it was his original intention to have exhibited, under that denomination, a poetic portraiture resembling the Zeluco of the novelist. This idea, however, was abandoned, when it was found that the public were so incorrigibly obstinate as to identify the poet and the pilgrim, in spite of all remonstrance and explanation. Yet a favourite conception is with difficulty dismissed from the mind; and though Childe Harold was suffered to quit the scene without performing any of those adventures and committing any of those excesses which he was originally destined to enact, the poet could not lose the impressions that his fancy had once formed in the labyrinth of his brain. Having given in his former pieces

the most bold and daring sketches of unprincipled guilt, clothed with circumstances of peculiar terror and atrocity, he determined upon showing the same cast of characters arrayed in the more dangerous garb of gaiety and humour. The whimsical tale of Beppo proved that his powers were equally adapted to comic as to tragic representations; and this versatility of talent his evil genius instigated him to display in the attempt to excite the passions, not in the cause of virtue, but of vice. Here, however, the noble poet was fated again to commit the blunder that branded his first and greatest narratory poem; that of making a tale of fiction bear a close resemblance to his own personal history. Nor was he more prudent, or fortunate, in the choice of a subject when he took "Don Juan" for his model; a personage become almost proverbial for wickedness, and disgustingly so by the figure which, as a dramatic hero, he cuts on the stage.

Having thus discarded the pretence to originality and set at defiance that of decorum, the noble author professed his design of following this goodly character through a regular Epic of twelve Cantos. Two of

these were accordingly sent into the world, in a quarto volume, at the beginning of the season in 1819; but, strange to say, though the public had, for some time, been prepared for the appearance of this exotic, it came forth without the name of either author or bookseller. By the law of the land, indeed, the printer was under the necessity of ushering, in his own proper person, this stranger to the world; and thus the mystery would have been developed easily enough, even had the poet not taken care to discover himself in the following passage, which put the matter beyond all doubt:

"But in his native stream the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd his art to some account.
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided,)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did."

Why the noble author should so plainly come forward, in the body of the poem, to tell a familiar tale of himself, and yet withhold his name from the title of

his work, is not very easy to be conjectured. It could not be from a respect for public opinion; for had he possessed a particle of that virtue, he would not have sent into the world a performance of which his very bookseller was ashamed; and it could not be with a view to deception, for in that case he would have avoided every circumstance likely to convert suspicion into certainty. In this unaccountable manner, however, did "Don Juan" stalk abroad, exciting the amazement of the thoughtless, and the indignation of the virtuous, by an audacious spirit of libertinism, to which few parallels can be found among the dreadful abortions produced by the unnatural commixture of genius and vice.

Though the leading characters are exhibited in the Spanish costume, the guise is so very thin and ill-managed, that the reader must be dull indeed who does not see in Don Juan, the same hero that appeared under the form of a pilgrim as Childe Harold. In that poem, however, some regard was had to the filial affections; but in this licentious tale, the author treats the most sacred relations of life as matter fit only for ridicule. Don Jose, the father of Don Juan,

is represented as a profligate who abandons his wife Donna Inez, by whom this only son is brought up with the most watchful attention over his morals. Of this lady and her husband the following sketch is given, which, whoever has paid any attention to the family history of the noble author will be at no loss to recognize:

" His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known—
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone,
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.

" Her favourite science was the mathematical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit,) was Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
A prodigy—her morning dress was dimity,
Her evening, silk; or, in the summer, muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

" Perfect she was—but as perfection is
Insipid in this naughty world of ours,
Where our first parents never learn'd to kiss,
Till they were exiled from their earlier bowers,
Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss,
(I wonder how they got through the twelve hours)
Don Jose, like a lineal son of Eve,
Went plucking various fruit without her leave.

" He was a mortal of the careless kind—
With no great love of learning or the learn'd,
Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
And never dream'd his lady was concern'd.
The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd,
Whisper'd he had a mistress—some said *two*—
But for domestic quarrels *one* will do.

" Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good qualities;
Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
And such, indeed, she was in her moralities;
But then she had a devil of a spirit—
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with realities,
And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape."

This high-minded lady, who has more of the Caledonian than the Spanish character, is about to sue out a divorce against her husband, when that legal mode of proceeding is put an end to by the decree of a higher power, and she becomes a widow. Notwithstanding the care taken of the education of Don Juan, by his pious mother, he turns out at a very early age, according to the vulgar adage, a chip of the old block; or rather, as the negro said of his young lord, "Massa was all block himself."

An intrigue takes place between this hopeful sprig of nobility and Donna Julia, the young wife of Don Alfonso; which being discovered, the lady is sent to a convent and Juan to Cadiz, where he is embarked on board a ship bound to Leghorn. In this voyage, the vessel, after encountering a succession of stormy weather, founders; and it is in the description of this sad scene that the author shines:

"Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave—
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;

And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

"And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony."

Nearly two hundred of the crew perish with the vessel; and only nine men in the cutter, and thirty in the long boat, escape. After struggling with the tempestuous waves for some time, the cutter is swamped, and all the people on board are drowned. The sufferings of those in the long boat, among whom are Don Juan, his tutor Pedrillo, and his dog, are painted with a minuteness that could only have been executed by one familiarized to the sea. The dog is killed and devoured; but Don Juan refuses to taste the flesh of his favourite, though afterwards he is glad to divide one of the fore paws with Pedrillo. For this incident

the author was indebted to the affecting narrative of his grandfather, as he was for another to the account of the shipwreck of the Lady Hobart packet. The pangs of famine at length drive the crew to the dire necessity of casting lots for flesh and blood. The lot falls upon poor Pedrillo, who is bled to death by the surgeon; but those who partake of the horrid banquet, go mad, and, by drinking salt water, die raving. It is impossible to conceive a more heart-rending scene than this; and yet, strange to say, the author has treated it in a mingled strain of pathos and drollery, as if he had determined to make his readers laugh and cry at the same moment, for when painting the extremity of misery to which the famishing wretches were reduced, he says,

> "At length they caught two boobies and a noddy,
> And then they left off eating the dead body."

But this is really moderate and decent, when compared with the following impious allusion to one of the most awful descriptions in the Sacred Scriptures:

"Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
To taste of heaven—if this be true, indeed,
Some Christians have a comfortable creed."

Shockingly offensive as this blasphemy is, there are yet passages of an infinitely worse description, both with regard to impiety and filthiness, thickly strewed throughout the whole poem, which will again bring old Ascham to remembrance, who says of the travelled libertines of his day, that "the mark they shoot at, the end they look for, the heaven they desire, is only their own present pleasure and private profit; whereby they plainly declare of whose school, of what religion they be, that is, Epicures in living, and Atheists in doctrine."

To bring the story of Don Juan to a conclusion; after enduring the most dreadful privations, the boat makes land and is overset, by which all on board perish, except the hero of the poem, who is reserved for fresh adventures. The place where he is cast on

shore is one of the islands in the Ægean sea, inhabited only by the family of Lambro, a Greek pirate, who happens himself to be then on a cruize. His daughter Haidee, however, an interesting maiden of seventeen, gives Juan a most hospitable reception, and he returns the favour by seduction. Thus end the two first Cantos of the publication; and the second opens with the arrival of Lambro after so long an absence that his daughter, having given him up for lost, had abandoned herself to a life of dissoluteness, under the guidance of her unprincipled paramour. The old man, surprised as he naturally might, to see on his arrival every where the appearances of riot and debauchery, makes his way into the house, where he finds Don Juan and Haidee fast asleep. On their awakening, the lovers are thrown into a state of confusion: Haidee goes mad, and dies of a broken blood-vessel, occasioned by the fright; while Don Juan, after a short conflict, is sent off in chains to be sold for a slave.

It cannot be denied that the powers of the author are displayed with great effect in the descriptions which he has given of the Grecian scenery and

manners. But the account of the luxury which Don Juan contrives to introduce into this lonely island, is outrageously improbable, and extravagantly over-charged. Among other attendants upon the lord and lady of this rocky domain, is a poet or minstrel, of whom it is said, that

> " He praised the present, and abused the past,
> Reversing the good custom of old days;
> An eastern anti-jacobin at last
> He turn'd, preferring pudding to no praise—
> For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
> By his seeming independent in his lays;
> But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha,
> With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.
>
> " He was a man who had seen many changes,
> And always changed as true as any needle,
> His polar star being one which never ranges,
> And not the fix'd—he knew how to wheedle;
> So vile he 'scap'd the doom which oft avenges;
> And being fluent (and indeed when fee'd ill)
> He lied with such a fervour of intention—
> There was no doubt he earn'd his laureat pension."

The noble satirist, not satisfied with this keen stroke, afterwards returns to the same object, laying

on the lash with increased severity, and introducing a burlesque ode in imitation of the "pensioned and laureated Orpheus." In the same vein of sarcastic humour he digresses from his tale to attack some other writers:

"All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocrasy;'
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two sisters, (milliners of Bath.)"

Now if this episodical cutting and slashing does not savour very strongly of personal resentment; the least that can be said of it is, that it is shamefully scurrilous, and in some respects cruelly ill-natured. Of the parties so grossly abused in these lines, it does not appear that two of them ever gave any offence whatever to the noble lord; and with regard to Coleridge, he had not long before received from the author of Don Juan a very high encomium. But consistency and sincerity could not be expected in one who had so

often praised and vilified the same persons, without assigning any cause for the change of sentiment. There was, however, one thing with which they who had now fallen under the displeasure of the noble lord might console themselves, and that was the reflection of having published no work so disgraceful as the poem in which they were held up to ridicule.

The history of Don Juan is carried on till his arrival at Constantinople, where he is purchased by a black eunuch for the favourite Sultana of the Grand Signor. Here our hero is compelled to put on female attire, in which disguise he attracts the notice of the Sultan himself; but at this period the author cuts the story short; and if he terminates it here, the world will be gainers by his prudence.

Of this Odyssey of immorality, there cannot be two opinions; for let the religious sentiments of the reader be as lax as possible, he must be shocked at the barefaced licentiousness of the poem, and the direct attempt made in it to recommend a promiscuous sexual intercourse as the sum of human happiness. Marriage is of course reprobated, and all the

laws of social life are set at open defiance as violations of natural liberty. Lord Byron is the very Comus of poetry, who, by the bewitching airiness of his numbers, aims to turn the moral world into a herd of monsters. It must however be allowed that in his tale of Don Juan, he has not acted the wily part of concealing the poison under the appearance of virtue; on the contrary, he makes a frank confession of his principles, and glories in vice with the unblushing temerity of a rampant satyr who acknowledges no rule but appetite. The mischief of the work is rendered doubly so by the attractive gaiety of the language, the luxuriance of the imagery, and the humorous digressions with which the story is embellished and checquered.

CHAPTER XVII.

Controversy on the Character of Pope, and Poetic Composition.—Attack on Mr. Bowles.—His Defence.—Letter of Lord Byron.—Reply of Mr. Bowles.—Observations on the Dispute.

WE have now to consider Lord Byron in a new character: as a controvertist and critic. His entrance into this field of contention, however, was not occasioned by an attack upon his own writings; nor in fact could any ostensible cause be assigned for his interference at all in a dispute with which he had no concern. About fifteen years since, the associated Booksellers employed Mr. Bowles, the favourite pupil of Warton, on a new edition of the works of Pope; which task he performed with great credit as a commentator, and not less so as a biographer and critic. A little after the appearance of this edition, Lord

Byron published his celebrated satire against the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers; in which piece he fell upon Mr. Bowles with unwarrantable severity, but for what reason it would be difficult and idle to guess. No reply was made to this virulent outrage; and some years afterwards, the parties met on friendly terms at the house of Mr. Rogers, who, much to his credit, exerted his efforts in prevailing upon the noble lord to suppress his poem. At length the edition of Pope became an object of attack to a host of critics, who accused the biographer of partiality, and taxed him with incompetency. He was said to have injured the moral character of the poet, and to have detracted from his literary honour. This outcry spread from the Thames to the Tweed; and they who were hostile to each other on general questions, now joined in hunting down the reverend editor of the works of Pope. The game being started, afforded rare sport to the public, by whom, as in most cases of clamour, the real intent of those who set up the war-whoop was not discerned. The object, however, so artfully concealed, was no other than to clear the ground for a rival edition of Pope's works, then meditated, and still proceeding in under the direction of

the principal instigator of this uproar. So profitable is the business of supervising the reprints of valuable works, that the province of editorship has become a sort of monopoly in certain hands, who by having the periodical press considerably under their influence are enabled to ruin every interloper, however honest and industrious he may be, or even though, in point of talent, he should be far superior to his assailants. But after all, what were the faults of Mr. Bowles? Nothing more than a simple, and in fact too mild a statement of those particulars in the life of Pope, which being notorious could not have been passed over without a violation of historic truth. Biography would be of little worth if the character of the man must be drawn with a half face, like the portrait of Cardinal Wolsey, for the sake of concealing the loss of an eye. Yet according to the fastidious taste of the vindicators of Pope, the mantle should have been thrown over the moral deformities of the man for the sake of his genius, which like "charity is to cover a multitude of sins." Mr. Bowles said no more of the imperfections of the poet than what all the world knew, and what no one in the present day can disprove. For this fidelity, however, the biographer is

stigmatized as a calumniator, and a defamer of the illustrious dead; though he has not told one half of what he knew to the disadvantage of his hero, and the other half he has softened into shade. But it seems the editor has committed a still more heinous offence, by asserting it as an axiom, that "all images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of NATURE are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from ART, and therefore of themselves they are more poetical." By this position as an incontrovertible canon, the editor tries the poetical character of Pope, which he pronounces to be more that of art than nature. Here the critics who wished to destroy the literary reputation of the commentator on Pope, joined in battle array to attack the position which he had advanced as the criterion of poetical sublimity. It was contended in opposition to him, that poesy itself is an art, and that, therefore, its most powerful effects are produced by the combination of images, in which nature is only a subordinate or passive agent.

But the argument adopted by Mr. Bowles, and which, in fact, is only the same with that of his pre-

ceptor Warton, was not easily shaken by sophistry, while it acquired additional strength when assailed by illustration. Thus Mr. Thomas Campbell, in his defence of Pope, prefixed to the Specimens of English Poetry, having adduced the image of a ship about to be launched as an instance of the superior beauty of art over nature, Mr. Bowles replied very happily by showing that this object would have nothing at all poetical in it without the more active and commanding powers of the winds and waves. Mr. Campbell upon this prudently retired, and left the arena, well aware, as may be inferred from his silence, that the more art shall be ransacked for similes, the more triumphant, nature will prove in the competition. Lord Byron, however, like a true knight-errant, took up the gauntlet, and in a long letter from Ravenna to his publisher, made a spirited attack upon the biographer of Pope for having only glanced at some of the Bard of Twickenham's immoralities: but the principal object of this desultory epistle is to controvert the opinion that for the power of poetical adaptation art is inferior to nature. The mode of treating this curious subject, pursued by the noble author, is so vague and inconclusive, that it would be a waste of

words to attempt any thing like an abstract; and, therefore, a quotation must suffice, but it shall be of the best passage in the whole work.

"I look upon myself," says Lord Byron, "as entitled to talk of naval matters, at least to poets: with the exception of Walter Scott, Moore, and Southey, perhaps, who have been voyagers, I have swam more miles than all the rest of them together now living ever sailed, and have lived for months and months on ship-board; and, during the whole period of my life abroad, have scarcely ever passed a month out of sight of the ocean, besides being brought up from two years till ten on the brink of it. I recollect when anchored off Cape Sigeum in 1810, in an English frigate, a violent squall coming on at sun-set, so violent as to make us imagine that the ship would part cable, or drive from her anchorage. Mr. Hobhouse, and myself, and some officers, had been up the Dardanelles to Abydos, and were just returned in time. The aspect of a storm in the Archipelago is as poetical as need be, the sea being particularly short, dashing, and dangerous, and the navigation intricate and broken by the isles and

currents. Cape Sigeum, the Tumuli of the Troad, Lemnos, Tenedos, all added to the associations of the time. But what seemed the most "poetical" of all at the moment, were the numbers (about two hundred) of Greek and Turkish craft, which were obliged to "cut and run" before the wind from their unsafe anchorage, some for Tenedos, some for other isles, some for the main, and some it might be for eternity. The sight of these little scudding vessels, darting over the foam in the twilight, now appearing and now disappearing between the waves in the cloud of night, with their peculiarly white sails, (the Levant sails not being of coarse canvas, but of white cotton,) skimming along as quickly, but less safely than the sea-mews which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their littleness as contending with the giant element, which made our stout forty-four's teak timbers creak again; their aspect and their motion all struck me as something far more "poetical" than the mere broad, brawling, shipless sea and the sullen winds could possibly have been without them."

This is really a beautiful picture; but it is surprising that the noble lord should not have seen how completely the whole of it made against the hypothesis which it was intended to support. Nature predominates so completely in this scene, that art is totally lost; and every idea is absorbed in the grandeur of the tempest. The sea has always been a fertile source of images to the poetical observer, as exhibiting a vast variety of changes and objects naturally belonging to it, without deriving any adjuncts whatever from art; yet the noble critic has ventured to assert that it is a monotonous waste of waters without a ship. What then are we to think of the following passages, one from Homer and the other from Virgil? In the Iliad, the passive valour of the Greeks is compared to an object in nature which nothing in art could equal:

> "So some tall rock o'erhangs the hoary main,
> By winds assail'd, by billows beat in vain,
> Unmoved it hears, above, the tempest blow,
> And sees the watery mountains break below."

Now here are images all purely natural, and, what is more, such as would be rather weakened than

heightened by an artificial object of any kind. In contemplating a bold promontory, upon whose lofty head the lightnings flash with harmless effect, and at whose base the mountainous billows rage in vain, we are struck with sublime admiration; but if instead of this towering and gigantic rock, rooted in the abyss and carrying its proud scalp to the clouds, you substitute the Eddystone Light-House, or any other building made with hands, the poetical beauty will be considerably lessened; for knowing that the object is of human construction, we at once lose the idea of assured stability.

Thus also the prince of Roman poets draws from the flux and reflux of the sea, a beautiful illustration of the persevering valour of the Latians:

"Qualis ubi alterno procurrens gurgite pontus
Nunc ruit ad terras, scopulosque superjacit undam
Spumeus, extremamque sinu perfundit arenam:
Nunc rapidus retro atque æstu revoluta resorbens
Saxa, fugit, littusque vado labente relinquit."

"Thus in full tide, alternate o'er the strand
Swells the proud ocean, and invades the land;

Wave after wave, the waters mount on high,
Foam o'er the rocks, and thunder to the sky;
Then in their turn the swelling floods subside,
And seek the channel with an ebbing tide;
Roll back as rapid as they flow'd before,
With all the plunder of the sounding shore."

Æn. l. xi.

Here we have a simple and common object, expressed in words corresponding exactly with the sense, and altogether painting both the natural scene, and the conflict of which it affords so apt a simile.

Notwithstanding this, Lord Byron contended, in opposition to Mr. Bowles, that the works of art confer poetry upon, instead of deriving their poetic beauty from nature; and, strangely enough, the noble critic actually ventured to fetch an elucidation of his position from the sublime imagery of prophetic scripture. His words are: "In the sublime of sacred poetry, 'who is this that cometh from Edom with *dyed garments* from Bozrah?' Would 'the comer' be poetical without his '*dyed garments?*' which strike and startle the spectator, and identify the approaching object."

This illustration is no less unfortunate for the works of art, than that of the storm ; for the garments of the warrior were stained with blood, and not coloured, as the noble lord imagined, by having been dipped in the dyer's vat.

There is throughout the pamphlet much more of the same loose and inconsistent declamation, for reasoning it cannot be called; but what disfigures it most, is the dogmatical and ironical language in which the letter writer speaks of his respectable opponent, whose very profession is respeatedly brought in by way of sneer and ridicule, as though it were impossible for a parson to be a good critic. This illiberality is the more inexcusable, as it is directed, without provocation, against one of the mildest men in the universe; and it is behaviour which could only become such a character as Squire Western, who roars to his chaplain, when remonstrated with upon his brutality, " thee art n't in pulpit now ; and when thee art I don't mind what thee sayest."

Mr. Bowles replied to his right honourable antagonist in two letters, written with some spirit, and yet in the

style of agentleman. There is not, however, so much critical acumen in them as might have been expected; neither has the author retorted upon his adversary those glaring proofs of inconsistency which were in his power. Lord Byron having, to make use of his own curious term, obtruded himself into the dispute, "like an Irishman in a row, any body's customer," could have no claim to respect, after setting himself up as a judge to determine a dispute of opinions by the "*argumentum baculinum*" of his own peremptory decision. Mr. Bowles should have met his adversary with the resolution of defeating and disarming him, instead of standing on the defensive and contenting himself with mere explanations. It required no great prowess or skill in argument, to have buried his lordship under his own authorities, and to have made him ridiculous by his own confessions. The main point which Mr. Bowles took, (and there he was invulnerable,) is this—that the essence of poetry being derived from nature, which is universal, has in that source all the elements of composition, to which the works of art, sublime and beautiful as they may be, only bear a relation, and consequently are not poetical in the abstract. It is not meant to say that artificial objects

are unpoetical—far from it; but the aassailants of Mr. Bowles argued against him as though that had been his original proposition. This gross misrepresentation he repelled, very satisfactorily; and he might have gained a decided victory, if he had gone farther, and shown, as it was very easy to have done, that there is not a single object in the whole range of human art that is not indebted, for whatever of a poetical character it actually does possess or is capable of, to its association with nature. Lord Byron, on this occasion, acted a very zealous part as the defender of Pope; but in so doing he condemned himself, for not having more closely imitated that harmonist, as well in the structure of his verse as in the moral spirit of his poems. The praise of Pope, however, ought not to have been joined with a reflection upon the Calvinism of Cowper; whose insanity and attempt at suicide should have commanded pity, instead of being made the subject of ridicule. There is in this egotistical letter a curious anecdote of Sheridan and Whitbread, with which the consideration of the poetical controversy shall here close. "Soon after the 'Rejected Address' scene, in 1812, I met Sheridan. In the course of dinner he said, 'Lord Byron, did you

know that, amongst the writers of addresses, was Whitbread himself?' I answered by an inquiry of what sort of an address he had made. 'Of that,' replied Sheridan, 'I remember little, except that there was a Phœnix in it.' 'A Phœnix!! well, how did he describe it?' 'Like a Poulterer,' answered Sheridan; 'it was green, and yellow, and red, and blue: he did not let us off for a single feather.'"

Here, however, an impartial by-stander might very properly have observed that a phœnix, though fabulous, was a far more appropriate figure to represent the resuscitation of a theatre from its ashes, than the pillar of fire which Lord Byron himself selected on that occasion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Dramatic incidents in the History of Venice.—Publication of the Tragedy of "Marino Faliero."—Performed without success.—Injunction obtained against the representation.—"Prophecy of Dante."—Tragedies of "Sardanapalus" and "the Two Foscari."

OF all the cities in Italy, there is not one so familiar to Englishmen as Venice, owing chiefly, perhaps, to the two popular dramas of Shakspeare and Otway. The residence of Lord Byron in that state seems to have inspired him with the ambition of rivalling those great writers, and of trying his strength in the same species of composition in which they excelled. "Every thing about Venice," says the noble lord, "is, or was extraordinary—her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance." How an existing city can have

the appearance of a dream, we are not told; but that the history of this republic abounds in romantic incidents well suited to histrionic representation, we can easily believe. One of these is the conspiracy formed in the year 1355, by the Doge Marino Faliero, to render himself absolute in the government, on account of an affront cast upon his lady by a libeller, and inadequately punished by the senate, because the offender happened to be one of their body. This circumstance, Lord Byron adopted for the construction of a tragedy; but, though the piece is regularly divided into five acts, and supported by a train of characters, we are informed in the preface that the noble lord had no view to the stage; for which he assigns this reason, that the English theatre is in a state of declension. Notwithstanding this declaration, the managing lessee of Drury-Lane ventured to bring out the tragedy, relying evidently upon the popularity of the poet, who, on the other hand, by his publisher sought and obtained an injunction from the Court of Chancery against the representation. There was, however, little or no occasion for such a legal prohibition; as the audience, without the chan-

cellor's authority, sentenced the play to oblivion on the night of its performance.

It is, indeed, one of the very dullest of all dull dramas, being totally destitute of plot, and insufferably tedious in the dialogue. The female character Angiolina, who, it might be expected, would interest the reader and audience most strongly, excites no feeling at all; and that for a very obvious reason, because she takes no lively concern in the business of the scene, nor in the resentment or fate of her husband. She is perfectly stoical, and moralizes like a philosopher about virtue and reputation, instead of endeavouring to work upon the passions of the Duke, or engaging actively in a cause that so nearly concerned herself. But if the characters are insipid and phlegmatic, the language is of a still lower description; of which the following speech of Faliero to his wife may be adduced as an instance:

"Well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although 'twere wed to him it covets most:
An incarnation of the poet's God

In all his marble-chisell'd beauty, or
The demi-deity Alcides, in
His majesty of superhuman manhood—
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not:
It is consistency which forms and proves it:
Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
The once fallen woman must for ever fall;
For vice must have variety, while virtue
Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect."

This is so far from being poetry, that it has not even the vulgar merit of being grammatical prose; and what the sentiment is, which the author meant to convey, in such an enigmatic mixture of cloudy metaphysics and incongruous metaphors, it would be idle to examine.

To the historical tragedy of "Marino Faliero," were appended four Cantos, of a poem, entituled "The Prophecy of Dante." The account of this segment of a larger work is as follows: "In the course of a visit to Ravenna in the summer of 1819, it was suggested to the author, that having composed something on the subject of Tasso's confinement, he

should do the same on Dante's exile—the tomb of the poet forming one of the principal objects of interest in that city both to the native and to the stranger. The result of this hint has been these four Cantos in terza rima. If they are understood, and approved, it is intended to continue the poem in various other Cantos, to its natural conclusion in the present age. The reader is requested to suppose that Dante addresses him in the interval between the conclusion of the Divine Commedia and his death, and shortly before the latter event, foretelling the fortunes of Italy in general, in the ensuing centuries. In adopting this plan, I have had in my mind the Cassandra of Lycophron, and the prophecy of Nereus by Horace, as well as the prophecies of Holy Writ."

This idea of converting Dante into a prophet is bold enough, but the authorities for so doing are still more temerarious; for here the obscure and oracular Lycophron, with the fanciful Horace, are placed upon an equal footing with the inspired writers of the Old and New Testament: the author, however, has gone farther than all this daring, by raising the Italian poet to a level with the divine founder of the Chris-

tian religion. His making Dante foretell the future political state of Italy, and of Italian literature, was pardonable, and might have been beautiful, if worked up in the form of a poetical vision. But unfortunately the noble lord has described the old bard as being truly rapt, and carried forth into the 'chaos of events' by the same afflatus which the "sons of Israel had within them" when they foretold things to come. The following parody of the lamentation of our Saviour when contemplating the destruction of the temple and state of the Jews, is so near to blasphemy, that the reader must be callous indeed to all feelings of propriety, who can regard it without detestation of the spirit in which it is conceived:

"Oh Florence! Florence! unto me thou wast
Like that Jerusalem which the almighty He
Wept over, "but thou wouldest not:" as the bird
Gathers its young, I would have gather'd thee
Beneath a parent pinion, hadst thou heard
My voice; but as the adder, deaf and fierce,
Against the breast that cherish'd thee was stirr'd
Thy venom, and my state thou didst amerce,
And doom this body forfeit to the fire."

Such is the "Prophecy of Dante;" in which, though the author professes his sole design to be that of doing honour to the memory of a great poet, it is impossible to acquit him of a lurking attempt to undermine the divine authority of the scriptures, by representing the sacred predictions as no better than the musings of a heated or gloomy imagination.

The ill success of Lord Byron in his dramatic attempt, had not the effect of disheartening him from pressing again into the service of Melpomene; for, within a few months after the failure of his tragedy, he brought out in one volume three new pieces, of which two were regularly constructed plays, and the other one of those strange compositions which, from their being founded upon scriptural subjects, have obtained, at least in former days, the name of "Mysteries."

The first of these dramas is upon the fabulous history of "Sardanapalus," the voluptuous king of Assyria, who is said to have destroyed himself and his palace in Nineveh, after an unsuccessful struggle against the two rebellious satraps Arbaces and Bele-

ses. The character of this luxurious prince is well sketched in the play; but the poet has availed himself of the dramatic licence in making him become both a penitent and hero. The introduction of a favourite Greek slave is happily contrived, and the part is well managed; but the bringing on Zarina, the deserted wife of Sardanapalus, merely to hold a dialogue with her fallen husband, previous to her departure for Paphlagonia, is so awkward that the reader will hardly avoid suspecting a covert allusion to some recent events in the English history. The dream also, which the Assyrian king relates to Myrrha his mistress, is very extravagant, and calculated rather to excite ridicule than to raise awe or produce sympathy. The language is in general more correct and lively than that of the preceding drama; but it has the same fault of being prosaic and metaphysical. Sardanapalus defends his conduct with the subtlety of a sophist; and, what is still more extraordinary in a man supposed to have lived in a land of idolatry, above five hundred years before the Christian era, he talks like a modern sceptic against superstition, and that too in the presence of a priest and a soothsayer.

The second piece is another attempt to dramatize a portion of the Venetian history. This tragedy, which is of a stronger texture than either "Faliero," or "Sardanapalus," exhibits a striking and terrible picture of the Council of Ten, which tyrannized over Venice in the fifteenth century, when the Doge Francis Foscari was obliged by that sanguinary tribunal to see his own son, Jacopo Foscari, racked three times, upon the unproved charge of having intrigued with foreign states. He was also sentenced to perpetual banishment, but died in prison; and the Doge his father, without any cause being assigned for such a measure, was deposed, which had such an effect upon his spirits that, we are told, on hearing St. Mark's bell sound for the election of his successor, he fell down dead.

Such is the story, which has afforded Lord Byron ample scope for the display of his powers in description. But here again, as in his other dramatic efforts, the noble author plays upon the feelings of his readers without raising their curiosity; for where there is no plot, the mind is fatigued, rather than gratified, by being dragged through five tedious acts, each

of which ends as if the whole business ended with it. The character of the elder Foscari, an old man of eighty, is feebly drawn; for it is neither consistent with nature nor poetry, that a father, even though past the age of man, should sit down like a dotard and suffer himself to be made a passive instrument, in the hands of a set of monsters, for the destruction of his innocent and only son. Even supposing that the chronicle of Venice has been strictly followed in this instance, the adherence to historic veracity is no excuse for the dramatist; who might, and ought, to have infused some spirit and dignity into the principal personage of the piece; instead of which, Francis Foscari is altogether a being destitute of strength of mind, and, as it should seem, of natural affection. With him Venice is every thing, and his son nothing; but, what is stranger still, the young man also, notwithstanding the horrible wrongs which he had endured, is made to feel the same strange passion for Venice, even when his limbs have been dislocated, by the barbarity of the "ten devils," as they were properly termed, who reigned absolute in that city. All this may be very pathetic, patriotic, and stoically magnanimous; but it is out of probability, and not

well suited to the passion that should characterize a tragedy. Shakspeare would have managed the story in a very different manner; and with regard to the unities, on the preservation of which Lord Byron prides himself so much, our immortal bard would have cared less for such an object than for the strength of his characters, the effect of their contrast, the business of the scene, and the vivacious reciprocation of the dialogue. In this essential combination of qualities to make up an interesting drama, the noble author is totally deficient; and hence his tragedies, as he calls them, however brilliantly they may sparkle occasionally with poetical beauties of sentiment and allusion, are too heavy for representation, and scarcely attractive enough to invite a second reading.

Though the tradition of the elder Foscari's death by a sudden shock is adhered to in the play, Lord Byron has contrived to raise a suspicion that it was occasioned by poison, administered in a cup of wine by the Duke's enemy Loredano. Yet in a note to Don Juan, the death of Haidee by a sudden hæmorrhage is shown to be probable, by the instance of the Doge of Venice, who, at the age of eighty, made it a matter

of surprise that the old " man should have" had so much blood in him. Here his lordship takes the opportunity of relating the following anecdote: " Before I was sixteen years of age I was witness to a melancholy instance of the same effect of mixed passion upon a young person, who however did not die in consequence at that time; but fell a victim, some years afterwards, to a seizure of the same kind, arising from causes intimately connected with agitation of mind."

CHAPTER XIX.

Origin of Plays on Religious Subjects.—Sacred Dramas, Ancient and Modern.—Ill adapted to the Stage.—Account of "Cain, a Mystery."—Dedication.—Bayle.—Manicheism.—Indecency.—Præ-Adamites.—Cuvier.—The Piece Pirated. Injunction refused.—Milton justified.—Conduct of the Publisher.—Anecdote of Curll.—Lord Byron's Letter.

BEFORE the Reformation, plays were made upon religious subjects only, and acted chiefly in churches, whence they were called MYSTERIES. These wretched interludes, as may well be imagined, were wholly destitute of a poetical character, and only calculated to amuse an ignorant assembly, incapable of a more elevated species of entertainment. At a subsequent period, when letters began to be cultivated, some tragedies were written in Latin, on Scriptural topics, as the "Jephthe" of Buchanan, and the "Adamus

Exul" of Grotius. Long afterwards Racine, at the desire of Madame de Maintenon, composed his "Esther" and "Athaliah," which were performed by the young ladies in the religious house of St. Cyr. But, however meritorious these pieces might be as poems, they were not adapted for the stage, there being something in the very nature of the sacred history, that makes such an exhibition carry the appearance of profanation. Since then, two female writers of eminence, one in England and the other in France, have acquired notice by the composition of what they call "Sacred Dramas;" but without intending that any of the pieces so constructed in the form of dialogue should be brought into theatrical representation. The propriety, indeed, of casting any part of the Scripture into a dress of this sort, may well be questioned, since it is scarcely possible so to model the incidents and the language, as to avoid affecting the sense of the original. Thus, for example, there is hardly a circumstance in the bible, that does not owe its beauty in a great degree to the simple brevity observed in the relation. Now when the narrative is dramatized, the poet of necessity is obliged to frame speeches, and to devise motives of

action, which, however consonant they may be to the characters introduced, are not in the sacred text, and therefore may possibly tend to the encouragement of error. The writers of whom we have been speaking, have in general avoided falling into any egregious fault; for, as they had no other object in view than to blend instruction with amusement, they took care to keep as close as possible to the plain story, and the analogy of faith. It never entered into their imagination to turn the bible against itself, by grafting upon any of its facts such monstrous fictions as would destroy the credit of the whole. The disgrace of doing this was reserved for the author of "Cain, a Mystery;" which work it is now our painful task to examine.

This performance is dedicated to Sir Walter Scott; and yet the author knew that the publication had been objected to, as of dangerous tendency, by his publisher, as well as by Mr. Gifford, and even by Mr. Hobhouse. His sending so reprehensible a composition into the world, after this united expression of disapprobation, evinced a marvellous respect for the judgment of his friends; but the attempt to procure

for his drama some degree of public favour, by addressing it to one of the most popular and moral writers of the age, merits a censure still more severe. If Sir Walter Scott really takes this inscription for a compliment, he deserves to go down to posterity with Cain branded upon his forehead; and if the noble lord intended it as such, he must have formed a vile opinion of the ingenious Baronet's principles and understanding. In his preface the author professes to have "composed his scenes in conformity to the ancient title annexed to the dramas upon similar subjects; but says that he has not taken the same liberties with his topic, which were common formerly." The audaciousness of this declaration is of a piece with the blasphemous texture of the performance which it preludes: for if there are no farcical representations in the Mystery of Cain, it exhibits, what is ten thousand times worse, a direct aim to overturn the faith of ages in the existence of one Supreme Intelligence, the sole creator and governor of the universe. Instead of this fundamental article of belief, which even philosophy itself, without the aid of Revelation, could receive and prove, the author of Cain adopts from Bayle, the great reviver of the Manichæan system,

the doctrine of two opposing and independent principles, the admission of which necessarily leads to atheism. Even for the very title of "Mystery," which the noble lord has given to his performance, he is clearly indebted to that learned compiler of exploded errors, who says of Christians that "they are bound to believe the mysteries which are said to have been revealed, however inconceivable and impossible they may be to reason."

It is obvious, therefore, that in adopting the word "Mystery," the noble author of Cain did not allude to the old dramas, but to the foundation of Christianity, which according to him and his master is a fiction irreconcilable with reason.

Into the particulars of the story of Cain it is not needful to enter, farther than to state that the principal agents in the piece are the Fratricide and Lucifer, who appears to him in the field, and, at his own desire, to know something of the state of the dead, conveys him beyond this sublunary sphere into Hades, where the shadows of the præ-Adamites appear, but which neither say nor do any thing. This curious phantasmagoria

being ended, Cain is brought back, with his head heated by the visions which he had witnessed; and soon after he slays his brother, in the attempt to overturn Abel's altar.

Lord Byron says that "with regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subject, but that he had done what he could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness."

What ideas the noble poet may have of the Devil's politeness, must be left to himself; but certain it is that he has not given any honourable specimen of his own in this passage—the reading of which puts one in mind of what Dryden (and he was no bigot) said of some of the wits in his day, whose company he shunned, because "blasphemy and atheism, if they were neither sin nor ill manners, are subjects so very common and worn so threadbare, that people who have sense avoid them, for fear of being suspected to have none."

But if the Devil does not talk like a clergyman, the noble lord, by the help of Bayle and his ape Voltaire,

has taken special care to make him prate with the cunning of a sophist, and he has managed the matter so well as to give even to the Devil's argumentation a colouring calculated to raise doubts in the minds of thousands. The noble lord and his advocates, if he has any, will perhaps pretend that the infidelity here brought forward is merely in character, and that the impiety belongs to Lucifer; but who has exhibited this being in a dramatic poem? and who made him utter what ought not to be written at all? Will Lord Byron, or any man, dare advance the position, that a poet has a right to create a character for the purpose of obtruding upon the world, through that fictitious organ, language which the author in his own proper person could not venture to publish? No man of common understanding can avoid seeing in the speeches of Cain and Lucifer, the sentiments of the dramatist himself; and to prove that this is not an unjust imputation, one passage alone will be sufficient. All the false reasoning about the introduction of natural and moral evil, is little indeed when compared with the diabolical justification of incest.

In the discourse which Lucifer holds with Cain,

and his wife Adah, the subject is thus introduced, for the purpose of showing that the connexion which then subsisted between brother and sister, would in the next generation become a sin by an arbitrary violation of the law of nature :—

" *Adah.*—What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch!
Lucifer.—Not as thou lovest Cain.
Adah.—Oh! my God!
Shall they not love, and bring forth things that love,
Out of their love? Have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? Was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other; and,
In multiplying our being, multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.
Lucifer.—The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin to you—whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.
Adah.—What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? can circumstance make sin
A virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves
Of ———."

Now this is not the delusive reasoning of a tempter, but conclusions put into the mouth of a child of nature, and so expressed as to make the reader believe that the law which prohibits certain connexions is an act of tyranny. To make the venom stronger, the author of this Mystery has made Cain and Adah twins, contrary even to the tradition of the Rabbins, and those old writers of legends, who say that Cain married the twin sister of Abel, that their relationship might be as distant as possible. Such is the morality of this poem; but it is only consequential of the principles of infidelity, for thus says Bayle, the oracle of the sect: "According to the rules of philosophy it may be maintained, that if it be repugnant to the nature of the Deity to produce sin, it is also repugnant to the same nature to produce creatures who will infallibly commit sin, under those circumstances in which he chose to place them: for according to our most distinct ideas, it is altogether the same thing to commit murder oneself, as to put a man into circumstances where we know he must inevitably be killed." Again: "If we depend only upon one cause, almighty, infinitely good, and infinitely free, and which disposes universally of all beings, accord-

ing to the pleasure of his own will, we ought not to feel any evil, all our good ought to be pure, and we ought never to have any thing dangerous. The author of our being, if He is infinitely beneficent, ought to take a continual pleasure in making us happy, and preventing every thing that may disturb or diminish our felicity; for this is a property essentially inherent in the idea of supreme goodness." These are the fundamental positions ramified into dialogue, expanded into declamation, and worked up into action, throughout the Mystery of Cain.

After the magic-lantern show, for which the first murderer takes so long an excursion, and that a much less amusing one than the famous journey of Mohammed to Paradise, Lucifer takes leave of his companion with this piece of philosophical advice:

> " *One* good gift has the fatal apple given—
> Your *reason*:—let it not be oversway'd
> By tyrannous threats, to force you into faith,
> 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
> Think and endure—and form an inner world
> In your own bosom—where the outward fails;
> So shall you nearer be to the spiritual
> Nature, and war triumphant with your own."

Were this passage, and the same might be said of a great many others in the drama, printed as plain prose, no reader who then saw it for the first time would ever dream that it had been divided into the form of verse. Of the general beggarliness of the language, one specimen, taken from the description of the world of the supposed præ-Adamites, shall suffice. Lucifer, in answer to a question put to him by Cain respecting those old inhabitants of the globe, says,

> " Their earth is gone for ever—
> So changed by convulsion, they would not
> Be conscious *to* a single present spot
> Of its new scarcely harden'd surface—*'twas*—
> Oh, what a beautiful world it *was* ! !"

For this notion of a succession of worlds, the noble author in his preface quotes the authority of Cuvier, and roundly asserts that the speculation is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it. Now having read the bible, he must know that the cosmogony of Moses directly maintains, and necessarily pre-supposes, a creation of the world in its original elements; and not the renovation of a

decayed planet out of the old materials. But though Lord Byron pretends to call in the aid of Cuvier it is clear, that he never read the works of that great naturalist: and that he is indebted for this, as he is for all the rest of his machinery and sentiments, solely to Bayle, who has defended the notion at great length in various parts of his Dictionary.

Having said so much upon the general character of this Mystery, it would be needless to enter into more minute criticism either on the slovenliness of the execution, or the attacks upon particular points of faith—such as the fall of man, the doctrine of the atonement, and the reality of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. It is enough to have shown that the foundation on which the author has built his structure, is one that former sceptics have taken advantage of, and that it sinks inevitably into the depth of Atheism; since, if the moral government of the universe is limited and divided, there must be endless confusion and misery among all the variety of beings that spring into existence—consequently the idea of omnipotence is at an end. This inference from the premises which he has laid down, or rather

extracted, the author of the drama has himself put into the mouth of Cain, who, when Lucifer says that "Jehovah and he both reign together, though their dwellings are asunder," answers him like an Epicurean, or one just fresh from reading Lucretius—

> "Would there were only one of ye! perchance
> An unity of purpose might make union
> In elements, which seem now jarr'd in storms."

After this, one may say with honest Plutarch, that, let superstition be never so disagreeable, it is infinitely better than Atheism: for the former does sometimes keep men from violence and indecency; but absolute scepticism, by pulling up the belief and influence of the Deity from the mind, leaves all actions indifferent, and the moral world becomes a chaos.

Among the extraordinary things which attended this composition, the conduct of the publisher was not a little remarkable. Having demurred to the printing of such a piece as Cain, and called to his counsels some of the literary friends of the author, who concurred with him in the opinion of its character, it was hardly to be expected that he would still

lend himself to the office of sending it into the world. Yet such was the case; and though this drama appeared in conjunction with two others, it was announced by a separate advertisement, for the purpose of exciting the greater curiosity. After this, when one of the freebooters of the trade seized this same Mystery, and printed piratically a cheap edition of it, the proprietor claimed his goods by an application to the Court of Chancery for an injunction to protect what he had himself admitted to be contraband. The point was well argued by Mr. Shadwell, the counsel; but in attempting to defend Cain by comparing it with Paradise Lost, he did his client little good, and himself less credit, since no two pieces can be more dissimilar. Our divine poet has, it is true, made Satan a leading character in his epic; but he is not the principal one, neither does he appear in his proper person for the purpose of effecting the ruin of man. The tempter is represented exactly as the Scriptural history describes him; but he is in the poem, as he is in the bible, a fallen being, and no more. There is nothing of a Manichæan tendency in Milton's immortal work; throughout which, the supremacy of the

Deity, the free agency of man, and the immutability of truth, are enforced and illustrated with equal power of argument and elegance of diction. What Johnson has said upon this point is so apposite, that while it fully vindicates Milton, it does at the same time in the strongest manner condemn the author of Cain. "To make Satan speak as a rebel," observes the profound critic, "without any such expressions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. There is in Satan's speeches, little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the same with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtiness and obstinacy; but his expressions are commonly general, and no otherwise offensive than as they are wicked."

This cannot be said of Lord Byron's Mystery, where both Cain and Lucifer doubt, reason, and blaspheme with mutual agreement from the beginning of their acquaintance till they part; and even when the

murder is perpetrated and judgment is pronounced, the fratricide sticks to his principles, taking consolation in the reflection,

> "That which I am, I am: I did not seek
> For life, nor did I make myself."

The refusal of the Chancellor to grant an injunction, has subjected his lordship to some rash censures; and it has been observed, that in consequence of the denial the copies of the work are multiplied. This may be true; but the evil, though great, would have been greater, had the first law authority in the land given the high sanction of his *imprimatur* to a book the direct object of which is to bring the religion of the country into contempt. The application to the Court of Chancery for the protection of this blasphemous play, is somewhat like the conduct of Curll, of libellous memory, who, when warned by the Bishop of London not to print Rochester's poems, sent his lordship a copy, and begged him to strike out the offensive passages. The worthy prelate, however, was not so easy to be duped; but returned the book to the crafty publisher, without any other remark than a

verbal message,—that if he printed it, he must take the consequences.

With regard to the present case, nothing can exceed the duplicity that marked the conduct of the parties; for if the bookseller really in his conscience thought the Mystery of Cain so objectionable as not to be fit for the press, why did he submit to the irksome task of ushering it into the world, merely because the author was obstinately bent upon the publication? That very resolution to make him a tool for so vile a purpose, ought to have stimulated him to reject the mandate as an unwarrantable act of tyrannous insult. But he submitted, and that without the plea of Romeo's apothecary; for he is far enough from standing in need of Lord Byron's assistance, though he knows full well the lucrative importance of their alliance. If any thing could increase the folly and inconsistency of this conduct, it was the direction given to the Counsel to disavow the preface, as forming no part of the work. By whom then was this preface written? or how came it into the hands of the printer, without the knowledge and consent of the publisher? Yet, in fact, there is no occasion for such a

question; the preface is Lord Byron's composition, and this the bookseller well knew at the time when Mr. Shadwell was instructed not to claim it. And why was the preface to be separated from the Mystery? Because the parties were aware that nobody cared a farthing for the former, or would miss it; since all the wickedness lay in the drama of Cain, and not in the foolish essay prefixed to it.

Having failed in the attempt to obtain legal protection for his blasphemous poem, Lord Byron addressed a letter to his publisher; who committed another act of indiscretion, in causing it to be printed in the daily papers. The author of Cain, in this curious epistle, acknowledges that the publication of the piece was owing to his pertinacity, and then he goes on talking about the attempt to "bully the publisher;" offering, right manfully, to appear in person, and take the responsibility of the work upon himself in case of a prosecution. Now it happens, and this the noble lord knew, that no one had threatened a prosecution at all. His profession, therefore, to save the publisher harmless, was a mere piece of gasconade; and at all events could be considered as no atone-

ment for the offence which he had committed against the public morals, and private manners. In this letter his lordship reiterated what the Counsel had advanced, respecting Milton,—but to as littl epurpose, for the author of Paradise Lost was a believer in the Bible, which it is the object of the Mystery of Cain to turn into ridicule. Had the noble author acted upon the principles of the great poet, he would have ensured a very different kind of immortality from that which now awaits him; for, as Milton observes in his Lycidas,

> " Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glittering foil,
> Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies,
> But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
> As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

CHAPTER XX.

Spanish Proverb.—Lord Byron's Attacks on Mr. Southey.—Reply of the latter in his "Vision of Judgment."—Term of the "Satanic School."—Retort of Lord Byron.—His Opinions on the French Revolution—on Politics—and Religion. Mr. Southey's Letter.—Parody on the "Vision of Judgment."

THE Spaniards have a good proverb, "El que tiéne piédras al de su vezino;" that is, "He that has his house covered with glass, should avoid throwing stones on the roof or his neighbour."

Lord Byron had not this wholesome lesson in his mind when he attacked so many contemporaneous poets, and some of them without the slightest provocation. Among other objects of his satire, the Poet Laureate

came in for the largest share of his virulence; and not content with throwing out the most biting invectives against him in his poems, and the newspapers, he even went so far out of his way, when agitating the controversy on the character of Pope, as to cast a reflection upon the "invariable principles of Mr. Southey." This animosity, therefore, evidently arose from the change that had taken place in the opinions and connexions of the Laureate, and most likely, in a great degree, from the very circumstance of his having been honoured with the poetic crown. A political change, when it occurs in one direction, is always considered as an unpardonable sin; but, like Plowden's case, when it takes an opposite course, then it becomes a virtue. In other words—a man who, from being a demagogue, turns moderate or a supporter of the government, will on that account be branded as an apostate; but if, from pique or disappointment, he quits the ranks of loyalty for the mob of faction, he will be hailed as a patriot. The former happened to be the lot of Mr. Southey; and in consequence Lord Byron, who ought to have had more sense and liberality, joined in the cry against him—without duly considering, that political principles may change

without any impeachment of a man's motives, but that moral principles are immutable, and that it is by these the character will be estimated hereafter, when the bickerings of parties shall be forgotten. Had the noble lord weighed this serious truth in his mind, he would not have written "Don Juan;" but having written it, common prudence should have restrained him from attacking those who needed no stronger weapons, than what he had furnished them with in this very work.

Admitting that Southey and his friends have forsaken their old political creed, and former associates; has not their noble antagonist renounced a creed of infinitely greater moment? and though he may boast of adhering inflexibly to a party, has he not abandoned his country, and broken all the ties which bound him to it?

Mr. Southey does not appear to have felt the repeated contumelies poured out upon him, with such sensibility as to think it necessary for him to retaliate; till the composition of his "Vision of Judgment" seemed to require some notice of the literary cor-

ruption of the age. In celebrating the virtues of the late King, and the trials which he had undergone during his long and unparalleled reign; the progress of opinion, and the changes produced in the state of society, could not well be passed over, without weakening the representation which the poet had undertaken to give. Of the boldness of this apotheosis, the manner in which it is conducted, and the peculiar style of versification adopted, it is not necessary here to speak. The Laureate conceived that he had an official duty to execute; and if in the performance he displayed little taste, it cannot be said that he has violated the laws of truth. The character of George the Third did not stand in need of the panegyrist. There was nothing in his private or public history that could either require the ingenuity of apology, or call for the mantle of charity. The Laureate had, in fact, more difficulty in finding an excuse for the nation, than for the sovereign, whose exalted and uniform merits had so long shone like a star of the first magnitude. Of this the poet was fully aware; and he lamented the depravity which, as it were in absolute defiance of so bright an example, had gone on progressively increasing. On the prostitution of poetry

he dwelt, in his preliminary discourse, in this strong language: "For more than half a century English literature had been distinguished by its moral purity, —the effect, and, in its turn, the cause of an improvement in national manners. A father might, without apprehension of evil, have put into the hands of his children, any book which issued from the press, if it did not bear either in its title-page, or frontispiece, manifest signs that it was intended as furniture for the brothel. There was no danger in any work which bore the name of a respectable publisher, or was to be procured at any respectable bookseller's. This was particularly the case with regard to our poetry. It is now no longer so; and woe to those by whom the offence cometh!" The Laureate having made his charge, proceeded to apply it more particularly against those whom he designated as the "Satanic School;" comparing them to the infidels from whose labours arose the revolution in France. The application to Lord Byron, as the head of this new school, was too strikingly direct to be mistaken; and accordingly, in the appendix to his tragedy of the "Two Foscari," he repelled the accusation with vehemence. His commencement, however, is curious and unfor-

tunate. He denies that the French revolution was occasioned by any writings whatsoever, and asserts that it would have occurred, had no such writers ever existed. Here the noble lord, in the heat of his anger, seems to have forgotten what he himself had acknowledged and boasted, of Rousseau and Voltaire, that they had "shaken thrones," by giving a new impulse to the minds of men. But, whether in verse or prose, the decision of Lord Byron will go for little in opposition to the evidence of facts, and the records of history. If the world is now governed by opinion, the consequence is obvious, that they who gain an influence over public feeling have a dreadful responsibility, for which they must be answerable. The encyclopedists in France, with the whole tribe of writers who were led away by their example, gave a fashion to the national literature, which operated so powerfully in morals and politics, that an opportunity was only wanted for the revolutionary spirit to overflow and destroy the established institutions of the country. Lord Byron may deny this, with the same scepticism that he calls in question the truth of revelation, and the moral government of the universe. But the proofs are written in letters of blood upon the page of modern history;

and unless the friends of order are active and zealous in counteracting infidelity and licentiousness, similar miseries may recur. That they will recur, the noble poet himself believes, though he deprecates the charge of contributing either in act or wish to the change which he anticipates. "I wish," says he, "to see the English constitution restored, and not destroyed. Born an aristocrat, and naturally one by temper, with the greater part of my present property in the funds, what have I to gain by a revolution? Perhaps I have more to lose in every way than Mr. Southey, with all his places, and presents for panegyrics and abuse into the bargain. But that a revolution is inevitable, I repeat. The government may exult over the repression of petty tumults; these are but the receding waves repulsed and broken for a moment on the shore, while the great tide is still rolling on and gaining ground with every breaker."

There is more poetry than argument in all this, and the latter part would look well in verse; though it has in fact been already so well applied by Virgil, as to render any new attempt at adaptation superfluous. But, setting poetry aside, may we not

seriously ask the noble lord, how it happens, that when the nation is in this perilous state, he, as one of the hereditary legislators, contents himself with living at a distance from the land of his fathers, to which he has so many more obligations than Mr. Southey, or ordinary commoners? The property of which Lord Byron speaks thus proudly, whether it be in the funds or elsewhere, is in a great measure national; for it is capable of proof, that his patrimonial estates were grants from the crown, and confirmed by parliament. But even allowing that they were not; and that all which he enjoys is the fruit of his own industry, and the meed of his great merit, yet as an Englishman of talent, and more especially as one of the barons of the realm, it is his duty to stand and fall in his proper place, instead of growling and prophesying in the land of silk and slavery. If the constitution is really in such a state as to need restoration, that good work must be accomplished either by a reform or a revolution. Now, when it is allowed that the first is the only desirable mode of securing this blessing, it may be asked how can the object be carried into effect, but by the union of those who have the power, ability, and will, to engage in the undertaking? The

revolution, which changed the dynasty, and that without blood, in 1688, was brought about by the associated nobility; but if the peers, instead of exerting themselves to preserve the constitution, had abandoned the country, our portion at this day might have been popery and despotism. We are not of the opinion that Lord Byron has the weakness or wickedness to desire a revolution, though he is so imprudent as to say that such an event is inevitable. But this we aver, that if there be a revolution, let the issue be what it may, as he has left us to take care of ourselves, no thanks will be due to him for any good that shall remain in our possession after the struggle.

On the subject of religion, the noble lord is equally unfortunate as on politics; for he says, in answer to the charge of attacking the established faith: "One mode of worship is merely destroyed by another. There never was, nor ever will be a country without a religion. We shall be told of France again; but it was only Paris, and a frantic party, which for a moment upheld their dogmatic nonsense of theophilanthropy. The church of England, if overthrown, will be swept away by the sectarians, and not by the

sceptics. People are too wise, too well informed, too certain of their own immense importance in the realms of space, ever to submit to the impiety of doubt. There may be a few such diffident speculators, like water in the pale sun-beam of human reason, but they are very few; and their opinions, without enthusiasm or appeal to the passions, can never gain proselytes; unless, indeed they are persecuted; *that*, to be sure, will increase any thing."

The former part of this rhapsody is at variance with the truth of history; for that portion of the revolution of France which was disgraced by decrees against all religion, natural as well as revealed, was conducted, not by a frantic party, but philosophers, geometricians, and astronomers, who were, all of them, in principle and practice, avowed atheists. The latter part is poetical; and what the author means by the "certain conviction which the people have of their importance in the realms of space," it would puzzle even a metaphysician with all his subtlety to explain. Nor is his lordship less happy in the winding-up of his paragraph, in asserting of the sceptics, that as "they do not appeal to the passions, they can never

gain proselytes." Now if by "appealing to the passions," we are to understand the attempt to influence the imagination, none are more guilty of that very thing than the noble author, and the writers whose talents he has eulogized, and whose opinions he has vamped up and adorned with the charms of verse. The entire body of sceptics owe all the influence they have gained over the minds of men, to this very art of working upon the passions; and the only method that has succeeded, or ever can succeed, in effectually destroying the delusion, is by bringing men to the steady exercise of their reasoning faculties. Lord Byron has shown his own skill in appealing to the passions, by saying that "sceptics will never gain proselytes, unless they are persecuted;" thus insinuating, as Gibbon had done before him, that Christianity is intolerant, and that infidelity makes men mild, patient, and amiable. Middleton, however, (and he is good authority in this case, for he was an enemy to persecution,) says that "'Tis not the believers of religion, but Infidels and Atheists, who in every country have always been the severest persecutors and cruellest oppressors of all civil as well as religious liberty."

The Laureate having observed something about "death-bed repentance," provoked his noble antagonist to more than ordinary wrath; and, by way of reply, he says: "In common, I presume, with most men of any reflection, I have not waited for a 'death-bed' to repent of many of my actions, notwithstanding the 'diabolical pride' which this pitiful renegado in his rancour would impute to those who scorn him. Whether, upon the whole, the good or evil of my deeds may preponderate, is not for me to ascertain; but, as my means and opportunities have been greater, I shall limit my present defence to an assertion, (easily proved if necessary,) that I, in my degree, have done more real good in any one given year, since I was twenty, than Mr. Southey in the whole course of his shifting and turncoat existence." In the same spirit, his lordship, warming as he goes on, thus concludes his replication: "I am not ignorant of Mr. Southey's calumnies on a different occasion, knowing them to be such, which he scattered abroad on his return from Switzerland against me and others; they have done him no good in this world, and if his creed be the right one, they will do him less in the

next; what his 'death-bed' may be, it is not my province to predicate; let him settle it with his Maker, as I must do with mine. There is something at once ludicrous and blasphemous in this arrogant scribbler of all work, sitting down to deal damnation and destruction upon his fellow-creatures with Wat Tyler, the apotheosis of George the Third, and the elegy on Marten the regicide, all shuffled together in his writing-desk."

In the midst of this fiery warfare, one thing, and that the most essential, had so completely escaped his lordship's notice, that he never paid the slightest attention to it throughout the whole dispute. Mr. Southey had charged him and his school, with attempting to debauch the minds of their readers by writings calculated only for the brothel. Upon this most heinous accusation Lord Byron is silent. He says not a single syllable in explanation of this part of his conduct; but leaves that count of the indictment, which most directly affects his moral character, entirely untouched. To what purpose then could he retort political apostacy against his adversary; when he

either could not, or chose not, to remove from himself a stain of infinitely greater turpitude?

The Laureate was not backward in bringing out a reply, and it was of a temperature correspondent with the collision by which it was elicited. The only portion, however, of this answer, necessary to be noticed here, is what concerns the personal history of the parties. "Once, and once only," says Mr. Southey, "in connexion with Switzerland, I have alluded to his Lordship: and as the passage was curtailed in the press, I take this opportunity of restoring it. In the Quarterly Review, speaking incidentally of the Jungfraw, I said: 'It was the scene where Lord Byron's Manfred met the Devil, and bullied him—though the Devil must have won his cause before any tribunal in this world, or the next, if he had not pleaded more feebly for himself than his advocate, in a cause of canonization, ever pleaded for him. With regard to the 'others' whom his Lordship accuses me of calumniating, I suppose he alludes to a party of his friends, whose names I found written in the Album at Mont Auvert, with an

avowal of Atheism annexed in Greek, and an indignant comment, in the same language, underneath it. Those names, with that avowal, and the comment, I transcribed in my note book, and spoke of the circumstance on my return. If I had published it, the gentleman in question, would not have thought himself slandered, by having that recorded of him which he has often recorded of himself."

Mr. Southey having observed that the exacerbation of his noble adversary arose from the animadversions bestowed upon the Satanic School of poetry, in the preface to the "Vision of Judgment," adds: "well would it be for Lord Byron, if he could look back upon any of his writings, with as much satisfaction as I shall always do upon what is there said of that flagitious school. Many persons, and parents especially, have expressed their gratitude to me for having applied the branding-iron where it was so richly deserved. Lord Byron, however, has not ventured to bring the matter of those animadversions into view. He conceals the fact, that they are directed against the authors of blasphemous and lascivious books; against men who, not content with indulging their

own vices, labour to make others the slaves of sensuality, like themselves: against public panders, who, mingling impiety with lewdness, seek at once to destroy the cement of social order, and to carry profanation and pollution into private families and into the hearts of individuals."

His lordship having called the Laureate a "scribbler of all work," receives this answer by way of recrimination: "I will tell Lord Byron what kind of work I have not done. I have never published libels upon my friends and acquaintance, expressed my sorrow for those libels, and called them in, during a mood of better mind—and then re-issued them, when the evil spirit, which for a time has been cast out, had returned and taken possession, with seven others more wicked than himself. I have never abused the power, of which every author is in some degree possessed, to wound the character of a man, or the heart of a woman. I have never sent into the world, a book to which I did not dare to affix my name; or which I feared to claim in a Court of Justice, if it were pirated by a knavish bookseller. I have never manufactured furniture for the brothel. None of these

things have I done; none of the foul work by which literature is perverted to the injury of mankind. My hands are clean; there is no 'damned spot' upon them—no taint, which 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten.' Of the work which I have done, it becomes me not here to speak, save only as relates to the Satanic School and its Coryphæus, the author of 'Don Juan.' I have held up that school to public detestation, as enemies to the religion, the institutions, and the domestic morals of their country. I have sent a stone from my sling which has smitten their Goliath in the forehead; I have fastened his name upon the gibbet, for reproach and ignominy, as long as it shall endure. Take it down who can."

Here the contest ended, but not the enmity, which continued to burn with an increase of fury, especially in the bosom of the noble lord, who carried his resentment so far as to write a parody of the Laureate's Apotheosis; but of a description so outrageously indecorous as to render the publication too hazardous for any printer to undertake with the least regard to his safety or reputation.

The hexameter verse adopted in the "Vision of Judgment," made both imitation and ridicule extremely easy; but the noble lord would have acted a wiser part in preserving a dignified silence; for if ever the burlesque poem gets abroad into the world, it will be at once considered as a full justification of the strong epithet that has been applied to some of the author's other works.

CHAPTER XXI.

Anecdote of Dryden. — His conduct contrasted with that of Lord Byron.—Projected Literary Institution at Pisa.—Anecdote of Voltaire.—The associates of Lord Byron.—The Writings of Shelley recommended by him.—English Journal at Pisa.—Lord Byron's Liberality.—Increase of his Fortune.—Law suit.—Impropriety of his conduct.—Review of his personal and literary character.—Conclusion.

IT redounds to the honour of Dryden, that when accused by Jeremy Collier, of having stained his dramatic pieces with impure scenes and profane speeches, instead of bullying the critic and justifying himself, he made a frank confession of his error, and said: "it becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one."

Happy will it be, if the future biographer of Lord Byron shall have to record a similar act of true magnanimity on his part; but as yet there appears no indication of any such salutary change. On the contrary the circumstance, too well accredited to be called in question, of his lordship's having established a literary circle at Pisa, where he now resides, after having quitted Ravenna, has a most portentous aspect. Thus the charge of his having formed a poetical school of immorality and profaneness, will, there is room to fear, be realized in the literal sense and to the fullest extent. This college of infidelity, founded, supported, and directed by the noble lord, under his own roof, will no doubt make a considerable noise in the world; though it is not very probable that mankind, after having so recently witnessed the practical effects resulting from a combination of talents, employed in overturning religion, will contentedly suffer a repetition of the experiment. There was, during a great portion of the century that is past, a legion of this description, but somewhat of a higher order of intellect, who distinguished themselves in the same course which Lord Byron and his associates are ambitious of pursuing. The patriarch of that frater-

nity began his project early in life, and he continued to labour at it through a long period, till he had very nearly tasted some of the precious fruits of the tree which he had planted. His followers, however, had that enjoyment, and they found to their cost, that what was so fair to the eye, mocked their hopes, and, like the apples of Sodom, "not the touch but taste deceived."

When Voltaire first began the work of enlightening the minds of men, at the age of little more than thirty; a worthy magistrate of France said to him: "You have undertaken that which is too hard for you. Religion is not to be shaken by your efforts." The answer of this sceptic was, "Nous verrons," "We shall see;" and within two generations Atheism was so triumphant in France, that the whole land was deluged with human blood.

Our noble countryman affects to laugh at this, and says, "That religion has too strong a hold upon the mass of mankind to be removed;" why then does he exert himself to bring it into such contempt as

must weaken that influence? If religion be in any degree necessary to public order and private happiness, the writer who makes it an object of ridicule, and who endeavours to lessen its obligations, does all that in him lies to introduce discord, to loosen the bonds of society; and, of course, to abridge the comforts of individuals.

The scheme of collecting around him a constellation of talent for the purpose of propagating his principles, is a goodly proof of the regard which the noble lord has for the human race, and of his respect for the institutions of his native land. It is true we can most gladly spare the worthies whom he has chosen as his co-adjutors in this great concern; and if to the Shelleys, and the Hunts, who are to be the professors in this new academy of blasphemy, the noble president shall be pleased to add a score or two more of the same kind, England will be a gainer by their emigration. One circumstance has already been related of the Pylades of the noble wanderer; but it is proper here to mention, that, besides avowing Atheism in Switzerland, he has circulated

poems in England, which he dare not publish, or rather, it should be said, which no bookseller will have the hardihood openly to sell.

Lord Byron disavows the charge of having assisted Shelley in the composition of his "Queen Mab," and he says, "I never wrote a line of the notes, nor ever saw them except in their published form. No one knows better than their real author, that his opinions and mine differ materially upon the metaphysical portion of that work; though, in common with all who are not blinded by baseness and bigotry, I highly admire the poetry of that and his other publications."

This declaration is of importance; for it is an admission that there is no other difference between Lord Byron and his favourite disciple, than upon metaphysics; it follows, therefore, that in morals they are agreed. It is not necessary here to examine the characteristics of the poetry which the noble lord has so extravagantly eulogized; but it ought to be made known that the writer has, among other outrages, boldly defended the lawfulness, as far as natural

right extends, of a brother and sister living together in a state of conjugation. Now this is the man to whose works, Lord Byron has given the high authority of his sanction, accompanied with the declaration, that whoever does not admire them as he does, is both base and a bigot. This anathema is really more ludicrous, than that of Lord Peter, in the "Tale of a Tub," who swore eternal perdition against any of his company that should refuse to swallow his brown bread, and deny that it was good fat mutton. Lord Byron may purge his brain as he pleases, and, having acquired new ideas of moral and poetical beauty, he is at full liberty to regale his morbid taste upon whatever objects shall strike his fancy; but this privilege does not give him the right of playing the dictator, and calling other men fools and knaves because they also venture to think for themselves. It was said of the ancient inhabitants of the island of Corcyra, by the polished Greeks, that Ελευθερα Κερκυρα χεζ' ὅπου θελεις; "they were at liberty to do in public what all the rest of the world endeavoured to conceal." The same latitude of thinking and acting is assumed by Lord Byron and the members of his school, whence the fruits of their associated labours may be easily augured.

But though we are willing enough that Italy should enjoy the honour of fostering this sect of modern Pyrrhonists, we have neither a wish to see the new academy transplanted from the Arno to the Thames, nor any desire to be illuminated by the works which they may produce. If our forefathers had some reason to be jealous of the combination instituted "de propaganda fide;" we may be allowed to entertain our suspicions of this society for the propagation of infidelity.

There are some, it may be, who will consider this scheme of establishing an English academy in Tuscany as a proof of the increasing liberality of the age; and one that is highly honourable to the noble patron, who has devoted his talents and fortune to the cause of literature. If indeed the object of this affiliation were the advancement of learning, the friends of truth and humanity would rejoice in the measure, and applaud the spirit of him with whom it originated. But, without calling in question the generosity of the English Mæcenas, we may reasonably entertain doubts of his prudence, if not some apprehensions of his designs. It seems extraordinary that

the noble lord should find it expedient to call to his assistance a set of writers for the purpose of compiling a literary journal at Pisa; but it has a doubtful aspect, when we see the proprietor and editor of the most seditious paper in England pensioned and drawn to Italy that he may have the management of this work. Lord Byron, we cannot help thinking, would have done more honour to himself, and benefit to society, in contributing to the support of some literary institution in his native country, than by joining himself, and that at a great expense, to a knot of persons whose talents and principles are unworthy of his patronage. There can be no doubt that the love of fame is the ruling motive of his lordship; but the mode in which he pursues his object, is one more likely to injure than to advance his reputation. Lord Byron has already obtained a much more elevated station in the world by his genius, than by his birth; the eyes of the present age are upon him, and they who come hereafter will be naturally inquisitive about his life, connexions, and opinions. So circumstanced, it might have been expected that he would have preserved the splendour of his talents unsullied by any wrong direction of them, and that having for con-

venience left England, he would have so deported himself as to give no occasion to his enemies to exult, or his admirers to blush for him.

When his lordship resided at Venice, he avoided as much as he could all intercourse with his countrymen; and in his rides generally took disagreeable circuits, that he might not fall in with those who were anxious to get a sight of him: but since his settlement at Pisa, where he has formed a much more extensive establishment, he has thrown aside that reserve in some degree, and no longer secludes himself from English society; though his intimates are select, and of congenial sentiments. This increase of his establishment, and more free communion with the world, may, probably, arise from the desire of enriching his intended journal with all the advantages to be obtained from a combination of varied knowledge; but how far foreigners will be edified by these new lights, or England honoured for having produced them, must be left to time and experience. The institution is, at least, a proof of literary enthusiasm; and it should be observed as evidence of the founder's munificence, that he has presented the copyright of

his most popular works, either to such particular friends whose circumstances rendered the favour of great importance to them, or to his publisher, who has reaped no inconsiderable harvest from so fortunate a connexion. The following anecdote also merits notice, as a pleasing trait of urbanity. Previous to his lordship's marriage, when he resided in the Albany, a young lady of poetical talent, but not successful in her literary attempts, found herself involved in difficulties, owing to the misfortunes of her family. Those friends who might have served her were abroad, and she knew not where to address them; her distresses accumulated, and she felt so severely the state of those who were most dear to her, that she resolved to apply to Lord Byron, on the plea of authorship, by soliciting his subscription to her poems. It is singular that her idea of his character was formed from his works, the perusal of which made her conclude him of an amiable disposition, and one who was much misunderstood by the world. Such as her imagination had pourtrayed him, she found him in reality. She simply stated her motives for applying to him, and requested his subscription; when he, in the most delicate manner, prevented her

from dwelling on any painful subject, by immediately entering into some general conversation, in the course of which he wrote a draft, which he folded up and presented to her, saying, "that was his subscription." She did not, of course, look at the paper while she remained with him, which was some time, as the pleasure of his discourse was too delightful to be soon relinquished: and while he professed himself highly interested in her future welfare, from motives of delicacy, he refrained from taking any active part in promoting the subscription; for, as they were both young, he feared, from the well-known censoriousness of the world, he might rather injure than serve her by so doing. On her leaving him, she inspected the paper, and found it to be a draft on his banker, for fifty pounds.

That one so capable of great and excellent things, should be alienated from his natal soil, to which he might have proved a high ornament and substantial benefit, is most sincerely to be regretted. And this voluntary expatriation is the more unaccountable, considering how many powerful ties the noble wanderer has to draw him to and fix him in England.

His patrimonial estate has already received a large increase; and he has recently obtained, by the death of his lady's mother, an addition to his income, which, under the peculiarity of the circumstances, ought not perhaps to be spent out of the kingdom. That his lordship has not been unmindful of his worldly concerns, is evident from the writs of ejectment which he some time since brought against the possessors of certain estates in Rochdale, on the ground that the lands had been illegally conveyed by a former Lord Byron and the trustees under his marriage settlement. A suit in equity followed, and the purchasers' titles were confirmed, with costs, against the noble claimant, who has appealed from the decree of the Court of Exchequer, to the House of Lords; before which supreme tribunal the matter now lies for judgment.

Whether these events, or the serious fracas which his lordship is said to have recently had with some of the military in Tuscany, will induce him to turn his face homewards, cannot of course be as yet known; but of this there can be little doubt, that in adopting such a resolution, he would both consult his true

interest, and act in a manner best becoming his station; for, after all, self-banishment has a tendency to create suspicions, and to weaken that attachment, which in all cases must be mutual to be lasting. But if the noble author will persist in dispensing the favour of his presence upon foreign climes, and if he will go on affectedly, or really, to despise his native land; he must expect that in whatever admiration his genius may be held by Englishmen, they will at last be disposed to turn the eye of scorn against him, and be as ready to cast him out of their minds, as he is to treat them with contempt. The popularity which he has attained; the avidity with which his writings are sought after; and the curiosity people naturally have to see and know a man of whom so much is said, ought to have produced a good-natured sentiment towards his countrymen, even though he might not have chosen to re-visit England. But we are sorry to observe, that the splendour diffused around his name has not had the effect of softening down the asperity of the noble author; for in one of his recent publications he professes his abhorrence to hold any contact whatever with Englishmen who travel in foreign parts.

This acerbity, however, itis to be hoped is in a great measure assumed ; and, perhaps, like the sombre tinge of his principal performances, it is nothing more than a colour put on for the sake of singularity. We may reasonably conclude that this is the case, from the report of those who are most intimately acquainted with Lord Byron; for, according to their united representation, no man is possessed of a milder disposition, or distinguished by pleasanter manners.

A similar instance of extensive literary fame acquired within so short a period, the annals of literature do not furnish ; but the nearest to it is the history of Pope, though in other respects there are scarcely any points of resemblance between the two characters. The great ethical poet was studiously correct in his compositions, and remarkably musical in the construction of his verse ; while the noble author on the contrary evinces a kind of wanton carelessness, and throws out his productions hot from the brain, without being at the pains to give them the slightest polish. Hence his rhymes are often discordant, and his similes indigestible; the sentences ungrammatical, and the sense scarcely intelligible. Lord Byron how-

ever, like Pope, has been accused of the grossest plagiarism; and some scribblers, envious of his reputation, have been at the pains of collecting numerous passages from various authors, in prose and verse, to discover parallelisms in the writings of this popular poet. One or two of our literary journals were disgraced with these invidious catalogues, the compilers of which might be compared to the critic in Boccalini's fable,—who, having presented to Apollo an immense volume of the errors of great poets, was directed in return to select the grains from a bushel of wheat, after which he received the chaff for his labour. It deserves to be known that the principal person engaged in this attack upon Lord Byron, was one who had servilely courted his favour, and flattered him in the most fulsome manner; but not meeting with the countenance he expected, he became, as is usually the case, the vengeful calumniator of the man whom he had idolized. The noble lord, in an appendix to his tragedy of the "Two Foscari," has condescended to notice the charge of plagiarism, in which he says, "I have had an anonymous sort of threatening intimation, apparently with the intent of extorting money. To such charges I have no answer to make. One of them is ludicrous

enough. I am reproached for having formed the description of a shipwreck in verse, from the narratives of many actual shipwrecks in prose, selecting such materials as were most striking. Gibbon makes it a merit in Tasso, "to have copied the minutest details of the Siege of Jerusalem from the Chronicles." In me it may be a demerit, I presume: let it remain so. Whilst I have been occupied in defending Pope's character, the lower orders of Grub-street, appear to have been assailing mine: this is as it should be, both in them and in me. One of the accusations in the nameless epistle alluded to, is still more laughable; it states seriously, that 'I received five hundred pounds for writing the advertisements for Day and Martin's patent Blacking.' This is the highest compliment to my literary powers, which I ever received." That the reading of Lord Byron has been very multifarious, is obvious upon the most superficial examination of his works; and, therefore, the casual coincidences of allusion and phrase between him and other writers may easily be accounted for, without supposing that a poet of such natural fertility of conception was under the necessity of borrowing from other sources than his own genius. This accusation of literary

larceny is too absurd to require any serious refutation: but there are some things affecting the poetical character of the noble lord, which his most enthusiastic admirers will find it more difficult to excuse. The prominent fault in his compositions is a total absence of moral feeling; amounting, apparently, to a studied disregard of the difference between virtue and vice. Representations of sensualists and debauchees, robbers and assassins, are brought forward in every possible situation, and they are made to express themselves so as to excite the reader's interest in their favour; though at the same time there is not one redeeming quality in the character of these heroes of profligacy, to balance their crimes.

What renders this bad taste still more offensive, is the strange and unnatural mixture of the right honourable writer's own private history, with that of his fictitious personages.

Childe Harold, Conrad, Lara, and Don Juan, have all of them a strong portion of this similitude, which, instead of enlivening, only serves to perplex the story, and confuse the mind, by dividing its attention

between what is real, and what is merely imaginary None of Lord Byron's heroes, however, can be said to possess a definite character; for though they appear with powerful effect on the scene, there is no mind in any of them; but all is storm, passion, and instinct. The females are of a description exactly suited to the men with whom they are associated; being beautiful, airy, and enchanting creatures, calculated for pleasure, but void of intellect.

The distinguishing feature of Lord Byron's poetry is eloquence; and that of the most vehement character. His verse rushes on with the rapidity of a cataract, carrying our ideas impetuously along in such a manner as to prevent any thing like repose or steady contemplation. Yet amidst the wild variety of objects and obscure disquisitions which this magical genius contrives to bring together, without any regard to appropriate selection or lucid arrangement, there are descriptions and sentiments of exquisite beauty and tenderness, profusely scattered throughout his poems, all of which show that he is a perfect master of the art, and that he wants nothing but a noble moral motive to render his works imperishable. Attempts

have been made to set up some other living poets, in comparison with Lord Byron, but these are futile; the noble poet is perfectly *sui generis;* he stands alone, and if not actually the very best of the existing bards of Britain, he shines more conspicuously original than any of them. It were to be wished indeed that he paid more regard to the purity of his sentiments, the harmony of his style, and the dignity of his subjects; but, as it is, his poetical abstractions, the vigour of his language, and the romantic cast of the creatures of his lively imagination, have procured him a lofty eminence, from which he will not fall but by his own indiscretion. The versatility of his talents shows that he is capable of the boldest flights, and that there is nothing within the range of poesy to which he may not aspire. Judgment alone is wanting to secure for him the high rank which he has already attained, and to carry him yet farther in the career of literary distinction. As yet the world has only witnessed astonishing efforts of daring genius, without one steady direction, or the accomplishment of any valuable object. If the noble lord will, in due season, form a proper estimate of his talents, and consider that utility is the only permanent consecration of

them, he may, notwithstanding his occasional errors, assure to himself the gratitude of the living age, and the admiration of posterity. Much has been said of the pernicious tendency of his lordship's latter productions; but it admits of a doubt whether his serious and metaphysical performances are not infinitely more dangerous. His meretricious stories may create a laugh, or perhaps shock the feelings; but the others contain the seeds of false and vicious principles which being imbibed by unsuspecting minds may take root, and prove injurious through life. Both his levities and his disquisitions are licentious; and it is painful to observe, that through them all there is, as in the writings of Voltaire, an assiduous desire to render those objects ridiculous, which have for ages been regarded as sacred. It is melancholy to see the fire of genuine poetry, applied to such baneful purposes; when it should only have been devoted to the sublimest of all services, that of promoting the cause of virtue and the welfare of mankind.

In spite of his misanthropy, the noble lord has a strong propensity to humour; but his love of joking is not always governed by discretion, and too often

it betrays him into gross indelicacies, profane allusions, and personal ribaldries; offences which neither wit can palliate nor provocation excuse. This propensity to sensuality and ridicule has increased with the popularity of the author, who, in proportion to the extension of his influence, seems to have studied how the power of verse might be most effectually applied in corrupting the heart.

Such a perversion of talent was never before witnessed in this country; for though one or two poets have mixed up scepticism in their works, they have done it in a disguised manner: and though others have delighted in prurient description and virulent satire, they have not ventured to justify crime or to attack religion. That the author of Childe Harold has committed these violations of the morality of literature, no man can have the presumption to deny; and that his example and writings will be attended with pernicious consequences to society cannot well be doubted.

Poetry takes a faster hold of the memory than any other species of composition; and by fascinating the

imagination it imposes upon the understanding fallacies which in a different form would be rejected.

When, therefore, a writer attains the high distinction of being universally read, translated, and imitated, the practical tendency of his performances becomes an object of importance; and if his personal history be necessary to the illustration of them, justice requires that it should be laid perspicuously open for the benefit of public morals and public taste, both of which are likely to be affected by his example.

Whether the portraiture here exhibited is a correct and spirited likeness must be left to the decision of competent judges; but this the Biographer can conscientiously aver that he has sedulously regarded the laws of Truth, and been more anxious to soften than to exaggerate the failings and errors of one who will occupy a proud station in the literary history of the nineteenth century.

THE END.

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